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With our love.

Xmas 1916.

Roda

ELIZABETH FRY

THIRD EDITION

Olivia D. Cary

ELIZABETH FRY

BY

GEORGINA KING LEWIS

Author of

"Critical Times in Turkey," "John Stoughton, D.D."

LONDON

HEADLEY BROTHERS

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TO THE MEMORY

OF

MY BELOVED FATHER,

JOHN STOUGHTON, D.D.,

A FRIEND AND ADMIRER OF

ELIZABETH FRY.

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1910

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	EARLY YEARS	11
II.	THE GREAT CHANGE	27
III.	THE PUBLIC CALL	38
IV.	PRISONS AND PRISON LIFE	44
V.	NEWGATE	50
VI.	CAPITAL PUNISHMENT	59
VII.	THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS	69
VIII.	CAST DOWN BUT COMFORTED	78
IX.	IN ALL THINGS CHARITY	90
X.	CONTINENTAL JOURNEYS	95
XI.	THE THRONE AND THE DUNGEON	116
XII.	NOTABLE PEOPLE	124
XIII.	JOURNEYINGS AND SUFFERINGS	134
XIV.	"CROSSING THE BAR"	146
XV.	CHARACTER	160
XVI.	CRIMINALS AND CRIME	163

CHRONOLOGY

Birth at Norwich	1780
Removal to Earlham Hall	1786
Conversion under ministry of William Savery	1798
Marriage with Joseph Fry and Settlement in London	1800
Removal from London to Plashet	1809
First Visit to Newgate	1813
Second Visit to Newgate	1817
Travels in Scotland	1818
Visit to Ireland	1827
Financial Troubles	1828
Removal to Upton Lane	1829
Visit to France and Scotland	1838
Interview with Queen Victoria	1840
Another Visit to the Continent	1841
The King of Prussia entertained at Upton	1842
Last Visit to Earlham	1845
Death at Ramsgate	1845

PREFACE.

THE Society of Friends is chiefly known by the type of character which it develops rather than by its organisation. "To bear witness by practice, as well as by profession, to righteousness and true holiness, as necessary fruits of faith in our Lord and Saviour, is one of the great duties of the Christian Church." Nothing outward or material marks them off from other Christian Churches. They have no elaborate or conspicuous buildings, in which they worship; they have fashioned no creed for themselves, or others; they do not seek to proselytise but are pleased to welcome those whose sincere convictions lead them to desire admission into the Society. Still they have won for themselves a somewhat remarkable position among people of all kinds and nationalities, as those who live in peace, and make for peace and the welfare of mankind; and endeavour to be loyal to "One, even Jesus Christ, who can speak to our condition." Through their personal qualities many Friends have lived and worked as beacons of light in the midst of a dark world, and such a one was Elizabeth Fry. There is no monument raised to her memory, but she is enshrined in the hearts of the English people as a woman who teaches us that,

> "So to live is heaven
> To make undying music in the world."

When we read of the impression made upon the Duke of Argyll (8th Duke) after meeting her, it is not surprising that the fragrance of her life is still with us, and that which this woman hath done continues to be told as a memorial of one who seemed always obedient to the Heavenly Vision.

The Duke of Argyll says: "She was the only really very great human being I have ever met, with whom it was impossible to be disappointed. She was in the fullest sense of the word a majestic woman. It was impossible not to feel some awe before her as before some superior being. I understood in a moment the story of the prisons—the words that came to my mind when I saw her were 'The peace of God that passeth all understanding.'"

There seems to be still a desire to have the story of her life re-told; to read of her marvellous activities and her unselfish devotion and affection for mankind. The way in which she was led into the dungeons and from the dungeons to the throne; and the power given her to speak words of tenderness to the depraved, and at the same time never to flinch from faithful and heart-searching counsel to those in authority, should strengthen our faith, and lead us onwards and upwards in the divine life, to be always true to the highest.

To perpetuate the memory of such a woman is a sacred task. One naturally shrinks from any touch that may mar the faithfulness of the portrait by exalting any of the infirmities of the flesh, of which she herself was so conscious. For this reason the writer has whenever possible let her speak for herself

of her inner nature, and brave struggle to be always diligent prompt and faithful, in following the Divine guidance.

The original life in two volumes, written by her daughters ; Augustus Hare's *Gurneys of Earlham*, and the very copious journals, kept by every member but one, of the two large families, form an amount of material from which it has been a little difficult to select wisely for so small a volume as is called for, but the writer has endeavoured to use that which best indicates the character of Elizabeth Fry and the scope of work which she accomplished.

GEORGINA KING LEWIS.

STOUGHTON HOUSE,
CROYDON,
Christmas, 1909.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.

ELIZABETH GURNEY was born in Norwich on the 21st of May, 1780. Her father, John Gurney, was a banker, descended from a John Gurney born in 1655, who early in life came under the teaching of George Fox, and joined the Society of Friends. Each succeeding generation had remained in membership with the Society to the time of Elizabeth's birth. John Gurney, her father, was a very broad-minded man, of keen intellect, and a very Gaius in his hospitality, thus making many friends from all the various religious denominations, and from the literary and artistic world around him.

He married Catherine Bell, whose beautiful portrait is to be seen in Gainsborough's picture of Priscilla and Edward Wakefield with Catherine Bell.

Catherine Bell's great-grandfather was Robert Barclay, the famous author of the *Apology*, a man of great gifts who, for conscience sake,

left a life of luxury for a convict's cell, and of whom William Penn says :—" He loved the truth and the way of God above all the world, and was not ashamed of it among men."

Catherine was a woman of unusual culture, and gathered to her family the scientific neighbours, whose society she greatly valued. Though associating with some who had little or no religious convictions, she always held her own firmly, and was most careful during her short married life to instil the truths of Christianity into her children's minds. A sentence from her diary shows her attitude towards religious writers, and her keen insight into their weakness. " Modern authors on religion and morality describe perhaps very well what human nature ought to be, but do they sufficiently point out the means of becoming so ? Do they direct the inquirers to the still small voice within ? "

As a mother she possessed a clear idea of what she desired for her children in the future, and a very shrewd knowledge of how best to guide and discipline them towards that end. The aim ever kept in view was how they could best serve their generation when men and women, rather than how they were to seek their own pleasures. A liberal education, founded on a broad basis of Christianity, supplemented by careful training in manner,

and thoughtfulness towards the poor, developed characters in her children that made them in after life so noted for their catholicity, intelligence, and beauty of family unity and love. Augustus Hare says that they played a more conspicuous part than any other family in the religious and philanthropic life of England during the first half of the nineteenth century.

Mrs. Gurney instilled into her children the "simple beauties of mathematics" as an excellent exercise to the understanding. As a portion of a woman's life is usually devoted to the comfort of the family, she taught them to work with their needle, to cut out their garments, to keep accounts, and to cultivate gentleness of manner, and becoming behaviour. She was very careful to train them to read properly, and she read the Bible with them every day, not to inculcate the opinion of any man or sect, but to endeavour to lead them into the *spirit* of the New Testament. So careful was she to teach them to read well that her eldest daughter, in her old age, used to assemble the young Norwich clergy to show them how the Scriptures should be read in church. One is tempted to wish she could have handed down "her beautiful intonation, and delicate sense of fitting emphasis" to some who are still engaged in that office.

When Mr. and Mrs. Gurney were married, his profession was that of a wool-stapler, and it was not till 1803 that he, with his two brothers, became partners in the Norwich bank. During the first years of their married life they resided in Magdalen Street, Norwich, where six children were born. Catherine, John (who died when an infant), Rachel, Elizabeth, John, named after his baby brother, and Richenda. Their summer cottage at Bramerton was the birth-place of the seventh child, named Hannah, Louisa and Priscilla being born afterwards in Norwich.

As John Gurney prospered and found his large family too numerous for his two small houses, he acquired the Hall at Earlham, the estate which has remained in the Gurney family ever since, an attractive old house, standing in a well-wooded park. The river Mensum runs through the grounds, which were an unending delight to the children. The lawn, the avenue of trees, the mossy banks of the river, tell of happy times when the children would sit out in the summer days to sketch, or read, or entertain their friends.

At Earlham the last three children were born, Samuel, Joseph John, and Daniel.

In the year 1792, after a beautiful married life of seventeen years, Mrs. Gurney died. On her death-bed, in the presence of her broken-

hearted husband and family, she entrusted the care of her children to Catherine, her eldest daughter. Then, repeating over and over again, "Peace, sweet is peace," her spirit was released from its earthly tabernacle.

She left eleven children, the eldest scarcely seventeen, the youngest not two years of age. Catherine, the eldest, said in looking back upon that sad time: "Here, then, were we left, I not seventeen, at the head; wholly ignorant of common life from the retirement in which we had been educated, quite unprepared for filling so important a position, and unaccustomed to act on independent principles. Still my father placed me nominally at the head of the family, a continual weight and pain which wore my health and spirits. I never again had the joy and glee of youth."

What the loss of her mother was to Elizabeth we may conjecture, when we find that the possibility of her mother dying some day so weighed on the child's intensely loving nature that she often cried herself to sleep at the thought. In the day-time, if her mother ever slept, Elizabeth would quietly step to her side, and listen to find out if she was breathing. More than forty years after this bereavement, she wrote: "The memory of her illness and death is sad even to the present day."

Catherine, immediately on her mother's death, took the reins of government into her hands at her father's request, and most loyally did she endeavour to be a mother to her younger brothers and sisters. Her rule was a very loving one, and "Kitty's advice" was accepted on all important matters. Indeed, it is beautiful to see how, in a most difficult position, she gained the admiration of her independent and critical sisters. Her sister Louisa speaks of her in the following glowing language :—

"How I do love Kitty! I never saw so generous and noble a disposition. She would give up every pleasure for another's, even pretending she does not like things in order that others may have them. However, I know her arts, when, on very cold mornings she pretends she does not like sitting near the fire, in order that others may take the warm seats. There is nobody like her."

Elizabeth in writing to another sister naively expresses her surprise that they were not all much nicer considering what a sister they had in Kitty!

Elizabeth was very shy and retiring and was not thought, when young, to possess much talent or strength of character. She disliked learning, and her education on that account seems to have been somewhat defective. The two strongest features which showed themselves in her young life were enterprise and benevolence. Kitty, in later years,

gauged her sister's character very correctly when she said, "Elizabeth had more genius than anyone, from her retiring disposition, gave her credit for. She had tender feelings, especially towards her parents, to whom she was the most loving and obedient of any of their children. Elizabeth was gentle in look and manner, and pleasing in person; though she had not Rachel's glowing beauty. She disliked learning languages, and was somewhat obstinate. In contemplating her remarkable and peculiar gifts I am struck with the development of her character and the manner in which the qualities, considered faults when she was a child, became virtues, and proved of the most important efficacy in her career of active service."

Thus her timidity led her to cultivate courage, her natural obstinacy became, under Divine grace, a finely tempered decision and firmness, and a child's strategy developed into great penetration and long-sightedness in judging the characters of others; which enabled her in a marvellous manner to win the hearts of the sick, the criminal, the outcast, and, perhaps even a more difficult task, the hearts of those in high places.

Though up to the age of eighteen Elizabeth was one of the gayest of the Earlham girls, enjoying a dance, entering into their out-of-door amusements, scouring the country with

her sisters in their scarlet riding habits, the desire to enter into the afflictions of others manifested itself before the age of fifteen, for we find that she requested her father more than once to take her to see the women at the House of Correction in Norwich. He seems to have shrunk from conducting so young a girl into a scene that must almost terrify a sensitive nature, but he gave way, and they went. Elizabeth held her father's hand tightly in a shy, shrinking manner, as she watched the piteous faces of the poor women. On returning home she contrasted their lives and surroundings with her own, and asked herself this question: "If this is the world, where is God?"—a question which is often asked in various forms, forgetting that God works through the natures of those whom He has made, and it is *we* who hinder the carrying out of His righteous laws by resisting His counsels, *we* who persecute one another, *we* who live for ourselves and fail to use our powers, and our wealth, so that there may be no cruelty, no oppression, no injustice, but love over all.

In later years Elizabeth learned this lesson, as few perhaps have done, and showed how much may be accomplished by those who are faithful to God's voice and guidance.

In the voluminous journals kept by each member of the family, as part of Catherine's

system of education, we get charming and truthful insights into the characters of the sisters through their transparent veracity, which was strongly insisted upon by their eldest sister. Louisa writes, after speaking of her pleasure in doing things to please others, "Another of my qualities which people call bad, but which I think rather good, is that I cannot bear strict authority over me. I do from the bottom of my heart hate the preference shown in all things to my elders merely because they have been in the world a little longer. I do love equality and true democracy."

The family must certainly have been a very attractive one, the daughters being lively and original, with an exceptional freshness of character and depth of family affection in each, which saved them from monotony on the one hand, and from anything amounting to a quarrel on the other. The frankness they indulged in towards each others' faults, certainly tested the genuineness of their affection.

"One of my chief faults," says Louisa, "is speaking unkindly to Betsy; she does so provoke me. She behaves in some things so aristocratically because she is the elder." But soon after we read: "Towards Betsy I feel a particular sort of attachment; her ill-health and sweetness draw my heart to her entirely."

Here is another peep into her Journal:

Journal, May 29th. "We were told that we were to go in the afternoon to the Rigby's, but the weather was so bad we could not decide whether to go or not. Betsy was for going. Kitty for staying. At last, after scolding, rowing, bickering, fixing, and unfixing, we all agreed to go. Chenda and Betsy went first in the chaise: Kitty, Rachel, Hannah, Cilla and I in the coach. We all got into good minds. When we reached the common who should we see but our brother John and Pitchford. How I do admire Pitchford. We had a delightful walk and a nice merry tea. At eight my father wished us to go home. I felt truly sorry, but every worldly pleasure must end."

The following is very amusing:

"Father is master, Kitty is mistress. Governess disliked by most of the family, sits in the drawing-room almost all day. . . . I think it most silly to bring children up to be always at work, and to be treated as if they were idiots, and never let them judge for themselves."

Kitty, who was privileged to see the Journals if she wished, thought it time to restrict the account written each day to six lines, whereupon Louisa remarks: "I entirely see that it is now her place to treat us as babies. I am very, very sorry."

It is on record that one day in summer these merry girls went into the high road and, linking themselves arm in arm, the seven sisters stretched right across the road. They waited for the Norwich coach, and when the horses

came galloping along, the driver saw the sisters were determined to maintain their position and stop his coach; which he had to do, amidst the merriment of the delighted party at having accomplished their purpose.

In the midst of a literary circle, fond of reading and recreation, and enjoying a dance at the close of the evening, their days passed most pleasantly. On a few occasions Prince William Frederick (afterwards Duke of Gloucester), when quartered at Norwich, joined the family circle, adding much to the amusement of the party, and he himself must have been greatly amused. Elizabeth speaks of his visit as occasioning a "storm of pleasure." He demanded from Rachel that she should preach him a sermon, which she did, in the true Quaker strain, to the evident satisfaction of all present.

The Duke, years after, described Elizabeth's beautiful figure and graceful appearance on horseback, and would laugh as he recalled her delight when riding into Norwich to listen to the military band!

Richenda records: "I am very glad to have seen a little of what high life is, Betsy had an offer from one of the officers; I never knew anything so droll as the whole thing was."

The Quaker Meetings in Norwich held in Goat's Lane, do not appear to have been very

profitable to the young people, who wrote of them rather disparagingly, and of themselves sometimes as having returned home "*goatified*," and at being so happy to escape from Goat's, and one sister exclaims, "How often Sundays do seem to come!"

Their most intimate friends were outside the Society of Friends. "The wave of infidelity" at that time was very marked in Norwich, and the girls were quick enough to pick up the many doubts that were freely discussed. Catherine was very unhappy at the "wilderness of error" in which she found the family. A very strong friendship, however, was soon to spring up with John Pitchford, a Roman Catholic, which was to alter all this. He was a great botanist and a deeply religious man, and while entering most heartily into the amusements of the young people, he spoke often and seriously of the truths of Christianity, avoiding at the same time any tendency to proselytism. "John Pitchford and Mr. Kinghorn, the Baptist minister," writes Catherine, "were the only two amongst the literary young men in Norwich with whom we were acquainted, who steadily and consistently upheld the cause of religion against the infidelity which prevailed in the place at that time, and John Pitchford was the first person after the dreary period who made us like religion." He seems to have been a constant inmate of the

house for some months, and the arrangement was made with the sisters that when he appeared in the early hours of the morning he was to throw stones at their windows as a signal that he had arrived.

He tells us of one day when he spent seventeen hours with his " most enchanting " friends. He arrived at 6 a.m. and he found Rachel, Richenda and Louisa in the garden. He sat down and read to them, and after breakfast they again wandered into the grounds and selected a shady spot where the whole party listened to Pitchford's Journal ; and when he had finished they vowed an " eternal friendship," as they said, " now we really know you." Betsy followed with *her* Journal in which she acknowledged all her faults with perfect candour. A row on the river took up most of the afternoon, and in the evening they went to the village church where J. Pitchford read, as he says, *Gray's Elegy* " with great effect," and Kitty responded " We will be your seven sisters." In the late evening he tore himself away, he tells us, with great difficulty.

But Friends began to talk seriously to Mr. Gurney about the frequency of Mr. Pitchford's visits. He was a young man of twenty-seven, and Catherine, the eldest daughter, twenty-two, and it was very evident that his admiration for Rachel might lead to something deeper. Mr.

Gurney spoke to John Pitchford, and the consequence was they soon saw less of one another and in time the friendship almost ceased. But it had left its mark; the hearts of the young people were more ready to listen to the truths of Christianity than formerly, and they were better prepared for the change which was about to take place in their family.

In the summer of 1797 Betsy writes in her Journal: "I am at this present time in an odd state. I am like a ship put out to sea, without a pilot. I feel my heart and mind so over-burdened I want some one to lean upon. I believe I am going to be religious or some such thing. I am now seventeen, and if some great and kind circumstance does not happen to me I shall have my talents devoured by moth and rust."

The great circumstance was at hand, for shortly after writing this, William Savery visited Norwich Meeting, and though Elizabeth was poorly, and generally glad of any excuse to avoid "Goat's," she had a desire to hear this American Friend, who had come over to attend Yearly Meeting.

Elizabeth's sister Richenda gives an interesting account of that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday:

"On that day we seven sisters sat as usual in a row under the gallery at Meeting. I sat by Betsy. William

Savery was there; we liked having Yearly Meeting Friends come to preach, it was a little change. Betsy was generally rather restless at Meeting, and on this day I remember her very smart boots were a great amusement to me; they were purple, laced with scarlet.

"At last William Savery began to preach. His voice and manner were arresting and we all liked the sound; Elizabeth's attention became fixed; and at last I saw her begin to weep, and she became a good deal agitated. As soon as Meeting was over I have a remembrance of her making her way to the men's side of the Meeting and having found our father she asked him if she might dine with William Savery at the Grove (our Uncle's house), to which, though somewhat surprised at the request, he readily consented. We went home as usual, and for a wonder we wished to go again in the afternoon. The next morning William Savery came to breakfast and prophesied of the high and important calling our dear sister would be led into. The result was most powerful, and evident. From that day her love of pleasure and of the world seemed gone."

Elizabeth speaks of William Savery's preaching as follows: "He seemed to me to overflow with true religion, and to be humble and yet a man of great abilities, and having been gay and disbelieving only a few years ago makes him better acquainted with the heart of one in the same situation."

John Pitchford, the Roman Catholic, was present at the meeting. He mentions the great crowd, and his being beckoned to sit up in the gallery with the preachers, and that he thought William Savery's "sermon" the best he had ever

heard in a Quakers' Meeting ; very candid, and liberal, its only fault being its excessive length—two hours and a half !

During the visit which W. Savery paid on the following morning he deepened the impression made upon Elizabeth, and she says : " To-day I have felt there is a God," and she even goes so far as to add : " If I were to grow a preacher I should be able to preach to the gay and unbelieving better than to any others, for I should know their hearts."

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT CHANGE.

THE sisters had been very united in their interests and their friendships, and they had lived a very free, gay and happy life together. For one of their number to separate herself from their usual occupations and amusements, and assume an air of solemnity, met with much disapproval. They frankly told Elizabeth that they thoroughly disliked the change which had taken place. In Richenda's Journal she expresses her views on the matter very plainly, a young lady, we must remember, of only thirteen years of age.

"*Sunday, March*, 1798.—I have felt extremely uncomfortable about Betsy's Quakerism, which I see to my sorrow increases every day. She no longer joins in our pleasant dances, and singing she seems to give up; she dresses as plain as she can, and speaks still more so. We all feel about it alike and are truly sorry that one of us seven should separate herself in principles, actions and appearance from the rest. But I think we ought to try to make the best of it, and reconcile it as much as possible to our own minds. Betsy's character is certainly, in many respects, extremely improved, since she has adopted these principles. She is industrious, charitable

to the poor, kind and attentive to all of us ; in short, if it was not for that serious manner which Quakerism throws over a person, Betsy would indeed be a most improved character."

Though Richenda writes thus, she felt it her duty to call Betsy to account, and to tell her openly how she disliked the change, and she asked her what it was that induced her to act as she was doing.

Elizabeth said she felt a call to be a Quaker, that it was no passing fancy, for she had felt happier ever since she had come to the decision, and she was acting from reason and not simply from enthusiasm.

Her dear Kitty gives a beautiful description of Elizabeth at this time :

"I have a clear picture of Betsy's appearance," she says. "It was peculiarly lovely. Her fine flaxen hair was combed simply and parted in front. Her white gown plainly made, fitted her figure, which was beautifully proportioned. I remember her sitting on the window seat, in what we then called the blue room, with her feet up, in deep meditation. It appears curious to have her form so written on my memory. But a change became daily more evident in her, and appeared more and more as a reality, though at that time we could not in the least understand it, and it was a very great cross to me. I now see how much the expression of our feeling must have added to her difficulty. When she told me she could not dance with us any more it was almost more than I could bear, and I tried to argue with her, and begged and persecuted her. But it was all in vain. The

firmness of her character was now called into play and I never remember her to have been shaken in one single point which she felt to be her duty. The Bible became her study, visiting the poor, especially the sick, her great object. We were too ignorant ourselves to know what the workings of her mind were, but we could discover the most marked change in her. To us she was now always amiable and patient, forbearing and humble. And in looking back upon the change in her life, and its great results, we may feel assured that God was at work in her soul, and that she was really and truly awakening to a new life in Christ Jesus. Yet it was after she had received these powerful impressions that with my father's consent she went to London, literally to see the gay life of the world, determined to prove all things and hold fast that which was good."

It was truly astonishing to them all, when Betsy asked her father if she might visit London in order to examine for herself the amusements and fascinations of the world. Mr. Gurney, a wise and loving parent, felt it best that she should see and judge for herself as to whether the step she was taking was grounded upon sufficient knowledge of the ways of the world to be of permanent value. Under his care, therefore, she was taken to the great city and left for some weeks with a relation, when to use her own expression she "tasted London." Extracts from her Journal tell us how she felt and what she did.

"*February 24th.*—On Monday I do not think it unlikely I shall go to the play. Tuesday I expect to spend with

Dr. and Mrs. Good. Wednesday I hope to see the Barclays and to have a dance. Thursday I expect to be with Amelia Opie.

"*Monday*.—I went to Drury Lane in the evening. I must own I was extremely disappointed. I had no other feeling when there than that of wishing it over.

"*Tuesday*.—I went to the play at Covent Garden. I still continue not to like plays. I think them so artificial that they are to me not interesting, and all seems so far from pure virtue and nature. My hair was dressed and I felt like a monkey.

"*26th*.—This morning I went to Amelia Opie's and had a pleasant time. I called on Mrs. Siddons, then on Dr. Batty, then on Mrs. Twiss, who gave me some paint for the evening. I was painted a little. Mr. Opie, Amelia and I went to the opera concert. I own I do love grand company. The Prince of Wales was there, and I must say I felt more pleasure in looking at him than in seeing the rest of the company.

"*27th*.—I called on Mrs. Inchbald. I liked her, she seems so clever and so interesting. My dearest Father came to London. We dined at —— and went to the rout in the evening.

"*April 16th*.—I arrived at home with my father after paying a few more visits."

It was during this visit to London that Elizabeth met an aged Friend, Deborah Darby, who on seeing the youthful earnest girl prophesied that she would be "a light to the blind, speech to the dumb and feet to the lame," a prediction which made a great impression on her listener, who said to herself, "Can this be?"

Writing of this time many years after, she expresses herself as feeling that one of the important results of her visit was the conviction that these public places of amusement tended to promote evil; therefore, even if she could attend them without being injured, she felt she was lending her aid to encourage that which she felt sure from what she saw hurt others.

"Betsy is coming back," writes Richenda, "she has been a good deal improved by her journey. From the workings of her own mind and her acquaintance with William Savery she seems to be changed from a complete sceptic to a person who has entire faith in a Supreme Being, and a future state, and I should suppose she feels all the delight which such a belief must bring with it."

From that time, with the usual enthusiasm of youth in a new cause, Elizabeth sought to make her life as difficult as possible. She adopted the rigid Quaker garments, and became what was styled a "plain Friend." Music and dancing, and outward adornments, were laid aside, and much friction was aroused when she endeavoured to induce her sisters to follow her example.

She soon began to consider whether she could do anything to help the poor children in the villages round her, and it was not long before she obtained the use of a building, where, twice

a week some seventy children were gathered together to be instructed by her in various ways. The School prospered, and "Betsy's Imps," as her naughty sisters called them, became deeply attached to her.

She succeeded in keeping perfect order, in teaching them a good deal, and in winning their life-long devotion.

Every Sunday evening they gathered together to hear her read the Scriptures, and thus she trained herself, all unconsciously, for the marvellous influence her reading was to exert in future years.

The friction caused in her family through her rigid plainness of life was a keen distress to her father, and it must have been with a considerable feeling of relief that he heard of Joseph Fry, the youngest son of William Storrs Fry, being in love with Elizabeth and earnestly desiring to gain her affections.

This would be a way out of a very great difficulty. Joseph Fry was therefore invited to Earlham, the result being that he soon made Betsy an offer of marriage.

She promptly refused him. Marriage was not to be thought of then. Her ideal of life was far otherwise ; it would overturn all her theories of self-sacrifice and devotion to humanity at large.

This obliged Joseph to leave Earlham, but he did not lose all hope of winning Elizabeth.

Mr. Gurney, however, strongly advised patience, and told this ardent lover that to press his suit would only endanger his prospects of success in the future.

Joseph Fry does not seem to have made a very favourable impression on the sisters, though he bore the highest character, sang splendidly, and was a good linguist. He was evidently not prepossessing in appearance, and possibly his belonging to a family of plain Friends was no recommendation to those fastidious young people, and they sincerely hoped Betsy would never consent to marry him. Catherine was perplexed. She felt that for many reasons it might improve her sister to have a home of her own, and a household to manage, and a husband to keep her from the tendency of exaggerating trifles, which was growing upon her. Copious tears seem to have been shed on her behalf by her sisters, who while they disapproved of the marriage, had a feeling that Joseph Fry would prevail in the end.

After some time Joseph Fry came again to Earlham by Mr. Gurney's invitation, determined to settle the matter one way or the other; but he was not going to subject himself to a second refusal.

To avoid that he took with him a handsome watch and chain, and on the first afternoon of

his visit he walked down the garden and placed the watch in a conspicuous place on a rustic wooden seat, withdrawing himself to a spot from whence he could see what took place, but hidden, by the shrubs, from being seen. He decided that if the watch was not carried off within a certain time, he would leave Earlham and never return again.

Elizabeth came out into the garden before long and on walking towards the seat saw the gift and divined its meaning. She paused, and then turning back, fled into the house. There she met her father, and for nearly an hour he tried to induce her to give her consent to this offer of marriage. Something within seemed to urge her forward, though she feared the joy might be a disadvantage and hindrance to her, but at last she was again seen on her way to the seat, walking slowly, her eyes looking upwards, and as if in prayer, till she timidly took the watch to herself and Joseph Fry knew he had won his treasure.

She never regretted the step she took. Joseph promised her he would in no way hinder, but help her, in her efforts after the higher life. He most loyally kept his vow, and though not himself in sympathy with some of her arduous undertakings he left her absolutely free to follow the Divine Guidance as it came to her.

They were married on August 19th, 1800, and took up their abode in St. Mildred's Court, in the City of London. Joseph Fry, as the junior partner in the Bank, resided in the house of business. He was a wealthy man and was able to provide his bride with such comforts as her habits rendered essential. She says in her Diary, "My inclination is to have everything handsome, but not merely for ornament, unless there be some use attached to them." Another day she writes: "We had the W——'s and C——'s to dinner. We provided handsomely, but I much disapprove of a luxurious table, as superfluity at table appears to me as bad, if not worse, than in other things."

In the August of 1801 Mrs. Fry's first child was born. A month after she wrote: "I did not experience that joy some women describe when my husband first brought me my little babe." This arose from the fact of her great weakness of body and spirits, but she recovered sufficiently to be able in a few weeks' time to visit Earlham with her "darling baby."

Hannah accompanied her, and on alighting from the carriage, with the child in her arms, saw a tall young man, Thomas Fowell Buxton, her future husband, who it is said "looking on her then for the first time said at once in his heart, 'She shall be my wife.'"

Soon after the birth of her little girl Mrs. Fry

began to give some attention to the London poor, and though much engrossed in the affairs of her home she devoted a considerable amount of time to visiting them. When she felt it wise she helped them with gifts, and sent her own medical man to attend them when ill, and in many ways manifested a keen interest in their welfare, both temporal and spiritual.

Life at St. Mildred's Court was a very busy one. Mr. and Mrs. Fry kept open house with the proverbial hospitality of Friends. Children came in quick succession, and in the same order as the Earlham family, after whom they were each called. There was the large household to keep up, visitors to entertain, the children to care for, a continued correspondence with the Earlham sisters, and times of retirement never to be broken into.

The Friends of Gracechurch Street Meeting appointed Elizabeth Fry as visitor to the school and workhouse at Islington, and that led subsequently to her deep interest in the varied needs and difficulties of the poor.

Still she was not satisfied. Her heart longed for a larger sphere of labour, for more personal contact with the poor of this world, and after some years of married life she says that instead of being a "useful instrument in the Church militant, she is a careworn wife and mother merely devoted to the things of this life."

She hardly realised perhaps where her strength lay, for after many years of extensive labours far from home, her brother in speaking of her said: "After all, those loved my sister Elizabeth most who knew her most in her private life. She was truly an attached and devoted wife, a cherishing and cherished mother, a loving and grateful sister, a dispenser of the true balm of Christian comfort in every hour of need to her intimate associates and friends. Her love which flowed so freely towards mankind in general assumed a concentrated form towards the individuals of her own immediate circle. There was not one of them who did not live in her remembrance; not one who would not acknowledge her as an especial friend, a helper and sustainer in life."

CHAPTER III.

THE PUBLIC CALL.

IN 1808 Mr. Fry's father, William Storrs Fry, died, after an illness of some weeks from the effects of an operation, at the house of his son, where he was most tenderly nursed by his daughter-in-law. Mrs. Fry often referred to the satisfaction it had been to her to minister to him and comfort him during his passing through "the valley of the shadow of death."

After the death of William Storrs Fry, Joseph removed with his family to the old and beautiful family residence at Plashet in Essex. To Mrs. Fry it was a renewal of early pleasures, and the plantations and extensive lawns, the running stream, and flowers, after the smoke and din of London, were a great joy to one who was so keenly alive to the beauties of nature.

One daughter, in referring to the change, says: "Would I could bring before you our mother as she was when we first lived at Plashet; the gentle firmness of her rule, the

sober gracefulness of her carriage; her exceeding love and tenderness towards her little children; her care of her domestics, mental and bodily, and her systematic attention to the poor. Household matters, correct account-keeping, the oversight of East Ham school, regular visits to the sick, and social duties, all followed in succession."

But her work was only in its infancy. She had not yet spoken in public. She shrank from the ordeal as most women seem to do; her experience being not unlike that of Catherine Booth. Again and again in her Journal we read of how she feared God might call upon her to testify for Him at Meeting, and she leaves on record that one day there appeared on their sitting down "so solemn a covering" that, notwithstanding all former covenants and all good desires (evidently to be obedient to the Divine call) she adds, "I flinched in spirit and turned my mind from it, instead of saying, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.'" Again she says, "If it be Thy work in me be pleased, O Lord, to grant faith and power sufficient for the needful time." God was gently leading His child, as He always does when His faithful ones are longing to do His will.

How often it is that to be obedient to the Heavenly vision means to be bowed in spirit through the humility of suffering, the secret

to eternal success in the highest sphere of life; and it is doubtful if any teacher ever makes much way into the hearts of his or her listeners except as he or she is baptised with the baptism that Christ was baptised with.

A great sorrow at last unsealed her lips. Her most beloved father was taken from her soon after the birth of her sixth child. He had been father and mother to his children who were most deeply attached to him. During his last illness he said, "I owe you all more than I have been able to give you." "Kiss me," he said to Priscilla, when he was growing daily weaker, and on his being unable to exert himself for it, he added, "Never mind we have kissed in heart." His last words were, "My dear children, live in love, for God is love." At the graveside Elizabeth kneeled down and expressed their thanksgiving for the life given. "A quiet calm," she tells us, settled down upon her spirit. Gradually from that time the call came to testify, and she was led to yield to the heavenly guidance, though she writes in her diary of the many years of struggling before the "extreme unwillingness" gave way to submission to the Divine will.

About a year after this Elizabeth Fry was, according to the custom of Friends, recorded as a minister, the Meeting being satisfied with her ministry and having much unity in acknow-

ledging it. Her own feelings are expressed as follows: "My husband brought me word in the evening that Friends had agreed to acknowledge me as a minister. This mark of their unity is sweet, and I think strengthening, and I believe will have advantages as well as trials attending it. I feel and find it is neither by the approbation, any more than by the disapprobation, of man that we stand or fall; but it once more leads me only to desire that I may simply and singly follow my Master in the way of His requirements, whatsoever they may be. I think this will make a way for me in some things that have been long on my mind."

One of Mrs. Fry's first efforts at Plashet for the well-being of her poor neighbours, was to start a girls' school. Nearly opposite Plashet House was a dilapidated building with a large modern room attached to it, and never used by the old people who inhabited the house. Mrs. Fry, by gentle persuasion, succeeded at last in inducing the old folk to allow her to use it as a school-room. Before long, about seventy girls were receiving instruction, with the help of the clergyman, and some ladies residing in the neighbourhood.

The poor were regularly visited, a depôt was filled with garments greatly needed, a roomy closet was furnished with drugs, and soup was supplied to hundreds during the winter.

" Madame Fry," as she was called, became most popular, but she was careful in all her charities to persuade the poor people to more thrifty ways. Her children were trained to feel it a pleasure to help their mother, and they were often seen carrying garments and food to Irish Row. Bibles were circulated, and many were taught to read whose children went to Mrs. Fry's school; requests, petitions and desires were continually pouring in, and in addition to all this, believing that vaccination was very desirable, Mrs. Fry acquired the art of performing the operation, and made it a point to investigate the condition of the parish, and see that the children were all vaccinated. Smallpox was scarcely known in the village as the result. One amusing incident is remembered when she lent a poor woman her own cow because extra milk was required for sale. Her husband saw it being driven out of Plashet gate and exclaimed, " My dear, what *will* be lent next?"

With these interests on hand, a large family needing constant care, and much entertaining, one does not wonder at reading in her Journal, " I have been so hurried by constant company and employments, as to feel at times a good deal tired."

During a visit to Earlham when the first Bible Society meeting was held in Norwich, we get a most interesting insight into Mrs.

Fry's powerful ministry, through the Secretary present, who records his impressions of the gathering.

"My colleagues and myself adjourned to Earlham where we witnessed a piety, generosity and affection, in a degree that does not often meet the eye. Our hosts and hostesses were the Gurneys, chiefly Quakers, who with their guests, High Churchmen, Low Churchmen, Lutherans and Baptists, amounted to thirty-four. After dinner, on the day of the meeting, the pause encouraged by the Society of Friends was succeeded by a devout address to the Deity from a female Minister, Elizabeth Fry, whose manner was impressive and whose words were so appropriate, that none present can ever forget the incident, or even advert to it without emotions, alike powerful and pleasing. The first feeling was surprise; the second awe; the third pious fervour. We felt like the disciples whose hearts burned within them as they walked to Emmaus."

CHAPTER IV.

PRISONS AND PRISON LIFE.

THE great work of Elizabeth Fry's life was now about to commence, the eager desire of her young life when dedicated to the service of mankind, was to be realised, in a manner and to an extent far beyond anything she could ever have deemed possible.

In writing of the prison work which was so soon to enter deeply into her life we must bear in mind that she was not the first person to take a warm interest in the welfare of prisoners.

Before the close of the seventeenth century the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge made some investigations into the condition of our prisons. The Methodists in the days of the " Holy Club " at Oxford, also included in their " works of mercy " the visitation of prisoners, but no reform was thought of till John Howard, towards the end of the eighteenth century gave his attention, and subsequently his life, to the subject. During many years of constant work he had relieved hundreds of poor creatures, and with resolute persistence had made known their conditions ;

but he describes himself with some truth as "the plodder who goes about to collect materials for men of genius to make use of." It remained for a woman of genius to carry on the work, as he prophesied some one would do after his death.

Prisons during the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century were in a deplorable state. Several hundreds of the poor prisoners perished for want of food; no special allowance was made for the sick, and, sick or well, they lay crowded in dirty cellars which were hardly ever cleaned out. The officers in charge often lived at a distance; and on one occasion in Ireland, when a fire broke out, fifty-four poor Frenchmen perished in the flames as there was no one at hand to deliver them. Sick women were left without beds and many lingered in slow agony under irons of intolerable weight.

There was no ventilation in Newgate, and about five deaths occurred every month through gaol distemper, which was occasioned by the bad atmosphere. To remedy this in some measure a windmill was erected on the top of the gate to carry off some of the foul air. But thirty-five years after that effort had been made to improve matters, the cells were so close as to be the constant seats of disease and infection. We are told, and it occasions no surprise, that prisoners appearing unconcerned at their

sentence were struck with "horror and shed tears, when taken to those dark solitary abodes." Newgate was regulated to hold 500 criminals, but in 1813 we find 822 in gaol. Hardly any bedding was allowed, no coals, and candles, or pails to the debtors. Young and old, criminals, lunatics, debtors and children, were all herded together; drink was sold to any who had money, and no limit put to the quantity. The whole system was one of bribery and corruption. "At every session criminals in scores were sentenced to death and the 'death sermon' in the prison chapel was an almost weekly occurrence. It was a favourite place for sightseers who used to attend the service and watch the poor wretches herded in the 'condemned pen' round a table on which was placed a black coffin. Even as late as 1833 we are told, 'sentence of death was passed on a child of nine who, poked a stick through a pane of glass in a shop front, and stole some pieces of paint worth twopence. This was housebreaking, and the penalty of housebreaking was death.' After some delay, however, the sentence was commuted."* When Mrs. Fry first entered Newgate she speaks of the filth, the closeness, the ferocious manners of the women to one another, and the abandoned

* From article in *The Daily Chronicle*, November 11th, 1909, on "Newgate," by E. Hooper.

wickedness which was indescribable. There was no attempt at any classification, and the severity of their treatment depended entirely on the amount of money they possessed with which to bribe the authorities. The gaolers were often very little better, morally, than the prisoners.

In the year 1813, Stephen Grellet and William Forster paid a visit to Newgate, and owing to the desperate character of some of the women prisoners, they had great difficulty in obtaining permission to enter the female wards. The fearful sight of misery and woe before them when they did enter, induced Stephen Grellet to go at once to his friend, Elizabeth Fry, and appeal to her to do something for the poor suffering creatures. This led her, in the company of one lady, a sister of Sir Fowell Buxton's, to pay her first visit to Newgate.

They found about three hundred women, with their numerous children, crowded together, without classification or employment of any kind, in the custody of one man and his son. They cooked, they washed and slept on the floor. When any stranger appeared they clamoured for money, with which, if given, they purchased liquors from a tap in the prison. The screaming and terrible language, the fighting and lawlessness were such that the governor, we are told, never entered without great reluctance.

Fearless, with the faith which God gives to those who are afraid of nothing but sin, those two noble-hearted women entered the cell and spoke to the depraved and miserable creatures around them; and during one of their earlier visits Elizabeth Fry says: "Dear Anna Buxton uttered a few words in supplication, and very unexpectedly to myself I did also. I heard weeping, and thought they appeared much tendered, for a very solemn quiet was observed. It was a striking scene, the poor people on their knees around us in their deplorable condition." Her loving heart was filled with the deepest pity and sympathy for them, and their helpless little children, and she longed to be able to do something for their permanent welfare. The impression of that first visit remained with her through life.

The second time Mrs. Fry entered Newgate she begged to be left alone with the women, and her request was granted. She read them the parable of the vineyard, and spoke to them of Christ having come to save those who had wasted their lives by being estranged from Him. Then after speaking of the consequences to their offspring of being in the midst of such surroundings she appealed to them to help her in some scheme for their education. She emphasised the fact that nothing could be done without their co-operation, and she was much

touched at their response, and evident desire for the advantage to their children.

It was a considerable time after the first few visits to Newgate, before Mrs. Fry was able to renew them. Another child was born, her brother, John Gurney, died, and she was always in request to soothe and comfort the dying. These events were followed by the death of one of her own children, little Elizabeth, five years of age, a sweet child, and more like her mother than any of the others.

So with her large family, numbering nine at this time, and with much sickness and sorrow, the mother could do little beyond sending frequent gifts of clothing to the poor prisoners.

CHAPTER V.

NEWGATE.

IN the early part of the year 1817, Mrs. Fry, after having placed her boys at school and intrusted her four elder girls to their dear Aunt, Rachel Gurney, accompanied her husband to London that she might have an opportunity of looking more closely into the condition of Newgate. George Crabbe, who was deeply interested in what he heard of Mrs. Fry, wrote of her at that time as follows :—

> "One I beheld, a wife, a mother go
> To gloomy scenes of wickedness and woe ;
> She sought her way through all things vile and base,
> And made a prison a religious place ;
> Fighting her way—the way that angels fight,
> With powers of darkness—to let in the light ;
> Tell me, my heart, hast thou such victory won,
> As this, a sinner of thy sex, hath done ? "

During that winter Mrs. Fry writes to her sister Rachel : "Newgate is the principal object now, and I think until I make some attempt at amendment in the plans for the women I shall not feel easy. I see and feel the necessity

of caution, and mean to be on my guard, and run no undue risk.

"I have felt in thy taking care of my dearest girls, that thou art helping me to get on with some of these important objects, that I would not well have attended to if I had all my dear flock around me."

On visiting the prisoners again Mrs. Fry was so terribly grieved at the condition of the half-naked, half-fed children, that she spoke to the mothers, proposing to establish a school at once if they would be willing to co-operate with her. She suggested that they should select a governess from their own number to begin with. The women hailed the idea with tears of joy, and by the time of Mrs. Fry's next visit, they had chosen Mary Connor, who proved most suitable for the post. She had been committed to prison for stealing a watch, but, under the influence of Mrs. Fry's teaching, she responded to the love manifested towards her, and was never known to break any of the rules, but faithfully and in a Christian spirit, performed the work entrusted to her.

The governor of Newgate and the Sheriffs of London were cordial in their approval of Mrs. Fry's plans, but very sceptical as to the result. An unoccupied cell, however, was given her for the schoolroom, and the work commenced. Several ladies came forward to

help Mrs. Fry in her difficult task; and when, with the aid of her brother-in-law, Sir Fowell Buxton, the matter was brought before the House of Commons, Mrs. Fry in her evidence lets us see what they had to contend with. She said: "It was in our visit to the school, where some of us attended almost every day, that we were witnesses to the dreadful proceedings that went forward on the female side of the prison, the begging, swearing, gaming, fighting, dancing, dressing up in men's clothes; the scenes are too bad to be described." The Journal is deeply interesting at this time, showing us the many trials and difficulties endured by this brave woman and her desire to be kept humble, because she felt she was exposed to praise, which, she says, "I do not in the least deserve."

Thomas Fowell Buxton gives us an insight into the very arduous work Mrs. Fry and her first enthusiastic Committee performed amongst the prisoners. The experiment was to be undertaken exclusively by the ladies, the Committee consisting of a clergyman's wife and eleven members of the Society of Friends.

For the first month they gave up all their engagements to devote themselves entirely to the reformation of the Newgate women. They almost lived amongst them. At first, every day in the week, and every hour in the day, found

some of them there, joining in the work or instructing the pupils, from the time they dressed to the close of day.

The city magistrates had told these ladies that "it was in vain to expect that such untrained and turbulent spirits would submit to the regulations of a woman, armed with no legal authority, and unable to inflict any *punishment!*" Mrs. Fry's answer was "Let the experiment be tried." It was tried and the result is expressed thus: "They saw no more an assemblage of abandoned and shameless creatures, half naked and half drunk, rather demanding than requesting charity. The prison no more resounded with obscenity and imprecations and licentious songs; and to use the coarse, but the just expression of one who knew the prison well; this 'hell upon earth' exhibited the appearance of an industrious manufactory, or a well regulated family."

It seems that on the night of their departure for Botany Bay it was the custom of the prisoners to pull down and break everything they could lay their hands on, and behave generally in such a manner that everyone in office dreaded such nights of violence.

After Mrs. Fry and her Committee took charge of the prison the oldest turnkey was perfectly amazed when the night came for the Botany Bay Company to be sent off.

"No noise was heard, not a window broken. They took an affectionate leave of their companions and expressed the utmost gratitude to their benefactors; the next day they entered their conveyances without any tumult, and their departure, in the tears that were shed and the mournful decorum that was observed, resembled a funeral procession; and so orderly was their behaviour that it was deemed unnecessary to send more than half the usual escort."

The condition of the poor women on the convict ships, and their behaviour, had been such that Mrs. Fry had felt some change must be made there. They had not sufficient clothing, they were not taught to read, no attention was paid to cleanliness, and they received no religious instruction. Mrs. Fry gave great attention to this subject; she visited with one exception every transport which sailed from England between the year 1818 until her last illness in 1841. This was not accomplished without great fatigue and exposure to bad weather. One account of what this meant is furnished by a harbour master at Ramsgate. He tells us that encountering a sudden thunder squall, he was looking ahead when he saw a boat labouring with very little effect against the gale. In this boat were two ladies in the habit of the Society of Friends, drenched with the heavy shower

which had overtaken them. "I was then," he says, "a dashing, high-spirited sailor, but I had already a secret admiration of the quiet demeanour of that Society, and occasionally had some of them with me, always intelligent and inquiring. I threw them a rope, and before the passengers were fully aware that we had stopped, the ladies were on board. The one I last assisted still held my hand, as she thanked me with dignified but beautiful expression. I had some little dislike to sects then, but who could resist this beautiful, persuasive and heavenly-minded woman? In her you saw all that was attractive in woman, lit up by the bright beams of philanthropy; devoting the prime of life and health and personal graces to her Divine Master's service. She told me that her companion, Mrs. Pryor, and herself, had been down to Gravesend to take leave of the unfortunate women (convicts) on board a ship, and gave me so touching a description of their behaviour that I volunteered to take charge of anything for her at any time."

One letter from some of the prisoners just before starting for Botany Bay is very pathetic. They had made some disturbance in the prison, and feeling very penitent wrote to Mrs. Fry.

"Honoured Madam,

"With shame and sorrow we once more humbly beg leave to address you, in justice to the greater number

of our fellow-prisoners, who through our misconduct have fallen in the general disgrace which our behaviour has brought upon us all ; for which we are sincerely sorry, and entreating our sorrow may be accepted and forgiveness granted by her whom we look up to as our most respected friend and benevolent benefactress. We are not only called by justice to this submission and acknowledgment of our fault, but by gratitude to you. Entreating you to impute it to our being led away by the passion of the moment, and humbly hoping this acknowledgment may prove successful in restoring us to your good opinion and contradicting the bad one impressed on the public mind, and

"With sincere regret and penitence we beg to subscribe ourselves your very humble servants,

"Signed by eleven women."

Mrs. Fry, in sending her answer, said she had two things particularly that needed mentioning for them to guard against which she felt had brought most of them to prison. One, giving way to drink, the other to immorality—the fall of women generally being traced to these two things.

On March 4th, 1817, Mrs. Fry writes: "I have just returned from a most melancholy visit to Newgate where I have been to see Eliza Fricker, previous to her execution to-morrow. Her hands were cold and covered with something like the perspiration preceding death. She was distressed and tormented in mind. The women who were with her said she had been so

outrageous before our going that they thought a man must be sent for to manage her.

"Beside this poor young woman there are also six men to be hanged, one of whom has a wife near her confinement (also condemned), and seven young children. Since the awful report came down he has become quite mad from horror of mind. A strait-waistcoat could not keep him within bounds; he has just bitten the turnkey; I saw the man come out with his hand bleeding as I passed the cell."

The strain before long became almost more than Mrs. Fry could bear; she felt herself to be in a whirlwind, with her husband, children, household affairs, the Church, relations, and Newgate all on her mind. Still her daughter Katherine said her mother had three great gifts, "her dignified and stately presence, her exquisite voice, and her constant and unruffled sweetness of expression," so that we see amidst all her interests she remained outwardly calm and self-possessed. The secret lay in her consciousness of the Divine Presence. "Thou hast been my Stronghold, my Rock and my Fortress," she reiterates in the Journal, and to her these words were a living power.

In addition to all else letters came pouring in from all parts of the country about the Newgate work, the writers seeking an interview with Mrs. Fry, requesting to be taken to see the

prisoners, and so on. Her daughters helped her continually, so that under her directions, the communications of each day were attended to as they arrived.

As the result of an exhaustive examination in the House of Commons on the condition of women in prisons, the following paragraph occurs in the Report: "The benevolent exertions of Mrs. Fry and her friends in the female department of the prison have, indeed, by the establishment of a school, by providing work and encouraging industrious habits, produced the most gratifying change; much must be ascribed to their unremitting personal attention and influence."

After some months in London Mrs. Fry returned with her husband and children to Plashet, most thankful to be again in her sweet home with her dear ones about her once more.

CHAPTER VI.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

VISITING Newgate constantly through the following winter, and coming across numerous cases of women who were to be hanged for forgery, Mrs. Fry was led to consider very seriously if something could not be done to put an end to capital punishment for theft; many feeling it such a terrible thing that money should be considered of higher value than human life, that devices were continually being employed whereby the criminals might escape.

One case, that of Harriet Skelton, attracted a great deal of public attention. A young woman, with an open, confiding face, had, under the influence of the man she loved, been induced to pass forged notes. She was in consequence ordered to be executed. Her behaviour in prison was so good that her companions said they supposed she had been chosen for death because she was better prepared for it than the rest of them. Many ladies of wealthy families visited her, entering the vaulted passages with their odour of damp, to see the clanking fetters

on the poor child. Mrs. Fry was moved to appeal to the Duke of Gloucester, with whom she had danced as a girl. He accompanied her to Newgate; and then to the Bank Directors, and put forth every effort to save Skelton, but in vain. She was hanged. The efforts Mrs. Fry had made in this case brought her into conflict with Lord Sidmouth, who strongly disapproved of the excitement which was rising on the subject of capital punishment. She mentions that in her great effort to save the life of the poor woman, she incautiously spoke of some of those in power. Lord Sidmouth had misunderstood her, and could not be induced to relent in his opinion.

It is impossible to go the way the Master went and not bring upon one's self the enmity of some; nevertheless Mrs. Fry was wounded and distressed.

"When under great humiliation, in consequence of this," she says, "Lady Harcourt, who most kindly interested herself in the subject, took me with her to the Mansion House, rather against my will, to meet many of the royal family. Amongst the rest, the Queen was there. Much public respect was paid me, and except the Royal family themselves, I think that no one received the same attention. There was quite a buzz when I went into the Egyptian Hall where one or two thousand people were

collected; and when the Queen came to speak to me, which she did very kindly, there was, I am told, a general clap. I think I may say this hardly raised me at all. I was so very low from what had occurred before, and, indeed, in so remarkably flat a state, even nervous." This public event, which must in itself have been a satisfaction, left her sad, as we see in the following letter to Lady Harcourt: "I can assure thee, gratified as I could not but feel in the kind attentions that I received that day from the Royal family and from thyself, I felt much too low at heart, and too grieved at the misunderstanding with Lord Sidmouth, to be capable of much pleasure. I have pleaded his cause privately and publicly, when I have heard anything said against him. I think he would pity me, if he knew what I have suffered night and day, for it is my principle, and I trust I may say my practice, to hurt no one, not even the lowest."

The condition of the English law, at that time, was deplorable. If it had been carried out rigidly it would have involved about four executions daily. The Old Bailey alone, it is said, furnished above one hundred victims a year. This being so, every possible endeavour was made to shirk the law. Judges shrank from their task, and every failure in evidence was hailed with satisfaction. The increase of the

population, the growing wealth, and the circulation of small notes, added to the evil. The Bank Solicitors could, with the Old Bailey authorities, deliver some from death, so that up to the last moment the poor creatures were in agony of suspense, hoping to escape their terrible punishment. Criminal law in word was one thing; in practice, another; and the consequence was that crime was rapidly on the increase.

Mrs. Fry did not believe that capital punishment tended to the security of the people, it hardened their hearts, and made the loss of life a light matter to them. She did not think its tendency was towards reformation because it led to unbelief, hypocrisy, and fatalism. She did not think it deterred others from crime because she found crime was increasing; and it looked too much as if punishment was for revenge, rather than for the reformation of the criminal.

Though repeated doubt was expressed as to the possible reclamation of the prisoners, the occupation given to the women, the Bible instruction, and the formation of a school for the children, produced the most favourable results, and in the House of Lords the Marquis of Lansdowne spoke of Mrs. Fry, who, like the Genius of Good, had entered a scene of misery and vice and produced, in a short time,

by her wonderful influence, a most extraordinary reform, and he urged those who were sceptical to go and see for themselves what had been effected.

Mrs. Fry also records her great thankfulness at the change which had been brought about, and she says : " I have found in my late attention to Newgate a peace and prosperity in the undertaking that I seldom, if ever, remember to have felt before. A way has been opened for us, beyond all expectations, to bring into order the poor prisoners. Already, from being wild beasts they appear harmless and kind."

Many interesting incidents have been preserved of the remarkable power exercised by Mrs. Fry upon those whom she endeavoured to help. In one case a prisoner confessed years after, when in Sydney, of having resented Mrs. Fry's sermon, as she called it, trying to avoid listening by counting to herself. In taking leave of the prisoners Mrs. Fry called this young woman aside and putting her hand on her shoulder said firmly and slowly, " Let not thine eyes covet." No other words passed her lips, but then " her words were low and awful," says the girl, " kind as a mother's, yet like a judge. Well, when I got to the colony I went on right enough for a time, but one day I was looking into a box belonging to my mistress and a gold thimble tempted me. It was on my finger in an instant, but just as I was shutting down

the box-lid I felt Mrs. Fry's firm hand on my shoulder, the pleading touch of her fingers. I gave one look about me, threw back the thimble and trembled with terror to find I was alone in the room."

The same power seems to have been exercised on two hardened women in one of the prisons visited. They were wholly unmoved during the address given by Mrs. Fry, but as she was leaving she went up to them, and taking each by hand, which she held firmly, she said in her indescribable manner, "I trust I shall hear better things of thee," which quite broke them down and made the opening for tender counsel.

We can readily understand that after Lord Lansdowne's words in the House of Lords, many sought admission to Newgate to see what was going on, and to hear Elizabeth Fry as she addressed the women. One of them describes her visit thus.

"The courtyard instead of being peopled with beings scarcely human, tearing each others' hair off, and blaspheming, presented a scene where stillness and propriety reigned. I was conducted to a ward where at the head of a long table sat a lady belonging to the Society of Friends. She was reading aloud to about sixteen women prisoners. They all rose on my entrance and curtsied. Instead of a scowl, or laugh, their countenances wore an air of self

respect and gravity, a sort of consciousness of their improved character."

"What Mrs. Fry quickly accomplished against tremendous difficulties," writes the "Chronicle of Newgate," "is one of the brightest facts in the history of philanthropy. How she persevered in spite of predictions of certain failure; how she won the co-operation of lukewarm officials; how she provided the manual labour for which those poor idle hands were eager, and transformed a filthy den of corruption, into clean white-washed rooms in which sat rows of women, recently so desperate and degraded, stitching and sewing, orderly and silent, was indeed extraordinary."

It is well in the present day to see where her strength lay, since there is a tendency to overlook one chief factor in a reformed life. "Out of the heart come forth evil thoughts which . . defile the man." Get at the hearts of men and women, set before them that which will inspire them, give them some lovable conception of God, and they will learn that it means they must "depart from iniquity." To reform the outward surroundings was Mrs. Fry's constant effort, but she never overlooked the need of inward reformation as well.

In the "Personal Recollections" of the Rev. C. Taylor we have a beautiful illustration of Mrs. Fry's power.

"I accompanied Mrs. Fry," he says, "to Newgate, and was present when she read a portion of the Scriptures to the women. Tier above tier rose the seats at the end of the room, and on the gallery the prisoners were seated. The expression on almost every countenance was of degradation and vice. It was a shocking spectacle; there they sat in respectful silence, every eye fixed upon the grave sweet countenance of the gentle lady, who was about to address them. After a pause for silent prayer of some minutes, she quietly opened the volume and turned to the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Never till then, and never since then, have I heard anyone read as Elizabeth Fry read that chapter. The solemn reverence of her manner, the articulation, so exquisitely modulated, so distinct, that not a word of that sweet and touching voice could fail to be heard. While she read her mind seemed to be intensely absorbed in the passage of Scripture and in nothing else. She seemed to take in to her own soul the words which she read, and to apply them to herself; and then she raised her head, and after another pause of silence, she spoke to the wretched women before her.

"Her address was short and so simple that it must have been intelligible to the capacities of her hearers; and it was soon evident that it had come home to the hearts of many there, by the subdued expression of their countenances, and by the tears that flowed freely from eyes which perhaps had never shed such tears till then. She set forth clearly and forcibly, though with a mild persuasiveness, the wonderful love of God. What struck me as most remarkable in her speaking, and no doubt that which won its way so powerfully to the hearts of those women, was that she always classed herself with them; she never said 'you,' but 'us' when speaking of those who were lost, giving them to understand, though

not in distinct words, that in the sight of God we are all sinners. I have heard many eloquent preachers, but I never, before or since, listened to one who had so thoroughly imbibed the Master's spirit.

"The effect of her teaching and of her very presence was not confined to that assembly; for as I passed with her through the different rooms of the prison, where the women were occupied with the different works she had been the means of procuring for them, the looks of tender reverence they cast on her, as she moved among them, and the way in which some whispered a blessing after her, testified to the influence she had obtained over them."

We have also the testimony of the women themselves, of the power her words had to change their lives. From many letters which she received the following is typical.

"New South Wales.

"Dear Madam,

"The duty I owe you, likewise to the Benevolent Society to which you have the honour to belong, compels me to take up my pen to return you my most sincere thanks for the heavenly instruction I derived from you and the dear friends, during my confinement in Newgate. In the month of April, 1817, how deep did that blessed prayer of yours sink into my heart; and as you said, so have I found it, that when no eyes see, and no ears hear, God both sees and hears, and then it was that the arrow of conviction entered my hard heart. Believe me, my dear Madam, I bless the day that brought me inside Newgate walls; for there it was that the rays of Divine Truth shone into my dark mind; and may the

Holy Spirit shine more and more upon my understanding that I may be enabled so to walk as one whose heart is set to seek a city, whose 'builder and whose maker is God.' I wish you to make this known to the world that the world may see that your labour in Newgate has not been in vain in the Lord.

"Believe me to remain,

"Your humble servant,

"Harriet S——."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

TOWARDS the close of 1818, Mrs. Fry in the company of her brother, Joseph John Gurney, paid a religious visit to Scotland. Joseph John Gurney was a minister in the Society of Friends, a great student, though busily engaged in the Norwich Bank. He had a good knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, of Jewish history, and antiquities, and was a remarkable preacher. He and his sister Elizabeth were very closely drawn to one another, and it was a great joy and strength to her to travel in his company. On their way they stayed at Knowsley, the seat of the Earl of Derby, greatly enjoying a quiet rest and helpful intercourse with the Earl, before looking into the conditions of prison life in the north. Though engaged in their ministerial labours she always found time to inspect the prisons, and she mentions seeing one poor man, whose deliverance she earnestly sought. He was fastened to a long iron bar, his legs passed through rings attached to the bar, some feet

apart. The position prevented him from resting, or undressing, and having been maintained for several days, it amounted to such torture that Mrs. Fry put forth every effort to alleviate his sufferings, but without avail. She also saw five men confined for debt day and night, without any change, in a closet measuring not nine feet square. At that time, by the law of Scotland, the gaoler was made responsible for the debt of any man who escaped; so very good care was taken never to let a debtor out for any purpose whatever. It would be difficult to imagine a more inhuman device.

The condition of the prisoners in Scotland was bad enough to affect anyone of less sensibility than Elizabeth Fry, and she felt it very deeply, particularly the imprisonment of lunatics. There were no asylums for the insane, and they were put into the prisons with the criminals, and their sufferings, through no fault of their own, appealed to this tender-hearted woman in no ordinary way. The poor creature fastened to an iron bar at Haddington and those chained to the bedstead or to the wall at Forfar, did not haunt her so painfully as the remembrance of the lunatics.

Joseph John Gurney was so impressed with the deplorable cruelty exercised that he published a book on their return home, and though

some attempt was made to contradict his statements, as is always the case, they failed entirely.

On their return home Mrs. Fry had a period of comparative quiet, before her last child was born. Though speaking of much weakness she visited different members of her family, attended and spoke at Meeting, and received many visitors, Italian noblemen, as well as other foreigners, in addition to her own relations and friends. In the midst of her loving family she pours out her heart in praise and thanksgiving to God for the refreshment and consolation she experienced.

On the 1st of November, 1822, her youngest child was born, the same day on which her first grandchild arrived. Only a few hours before this doubly happy event she had gathered her family together and poured forth her soul "in fervent prayer" for her daughter and herself. In her Journal she says, "We were both very graciously and wonderfully helped," and then she adds, "Grant me dearest Lord a little help to bring me again into life; that I may serve Thee better, love Thee more; and as a wife, mother, mistress, and member of Thy Church, and of society at large, may more perfectly keep my eye single unto Thee." To the daughter she writes a few days afterwards: "The accounts of my grandson give me much

pleasure. I think he would be in grandmamma's eyes a lovely child. I long to love him like my own; I think I shall feel them like dear little twins. I do not know which to like best, the smallness of mine, or the fineness of thine."

A very few months after this she was again at Newgate, where she received a most warm welcome from the prisoners. There she met the Secretary of State, Sir Robert Peel, and the speaker of the House of Commons. "I trust the time," she says, "was blessed to the good of the cause." "Sixth day in town; again to Newgate, one of the Bishops and many others there, it was a solemn time, a power better than ourselves seemed remarkably over us; beside these out-of-door objects, I am much engaged in nursing my babe, which is a sweet employment, but takes time."

During a visit to England of the Prince and Princess of Denmark, they took a deep interest in Mrs. Fry's work, and on paying her respects at Gloucester House, Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester presented her to the Princess. After this the Princess sent word she would honour the family at Plashet by a visit. She remained for some hours, and from that time kept up an intercourse with Mrs. Fry till the close of her life.

With all her outward work Mrs. Fry devoted much time to the affairs of her Society. She attended Monthly and Quarterly Meetings for considering the affairs of the Society in their neighbourhood, and exercising discipline when necessary. From these gatherings important matters are often referred to the Yearly Meeting, where every Monthly and Quarterly Meeting is represented, and a condensed view of the state of the Society is brought forward.

Her youngest daughter—who entered the Church of England—speaks of the sitting of the Women's Yearly Meeting as something to be seen to be imagined. It is, she says, "a singular and striking scene, and may vie with any of the deliberate assemblies in which men are convened throughout the world, in gravity, absence of display, and in steady attention to the business before it; their countenances bespeaking unusual good sense and power of attention, listening to and weighing the matter laid before them. Those who being 'ministers' or 'elders' of the Society usually take a more prominent part, rising, one at a time to give information, or offer an opinion; but the person of least account in the meeting is equally at liberty to address the assembly and equally sure of being heard with kind and courteous attention."

At the Yearly Meeting held in 1823 Elizabeth

Fry felt led to go to the Men's Meeting* and deliver a message " in real unity," which proved to be a remarkable occasion of much edification and consolation.

The manner of worship in the Society of Friends is an expression of the fact that they believe God speaks to the heart of man, when that heart is yielded to the influences of the Divine Presence.

" The word of the Lord came to Abram," quotes John Ruskin, and then in his forcible and quaint way he goes on to say : " Of course you can't imagine such a thing as that the word of God should ever come to *you*. But here in the Latin Bible somebody is represented as saying what really means ' There was made to Abram a sermon of the Lord.' "

The members of the Society of Friends *do* believe that the word of God may come to any waiting and expectant soul, and for that reason they meet in silence, no external aid forcing their utterance into expressions that may be insincere, no attempt being made to press language from their lips that does not express their own experience, or belief. " Be still and know that I am God " brings a wonderful consciousness of how God can reveal Himself to the hearts of His children. And then in the calm and

* The men's meeting and the women's meeting are now merged in one.

peace anyone present is free to utter whatever God has laid on his or her heart to express.

" I think," says Joseph John Gurney, " that Friends have reason on their side with respect to the ministry ; because I can hardly conceive any other authority for the ministry than the direct gift of the Holy Ghost testifying that ' where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' "

An account given by a clergyman of the Church of England of a Meeting for Worship, which he attended with Elizabeth Fry, sets before us the impression made on the mind of an outsider in attending a Friends' Meeting for the first time. He writes : " Finding while I was visiting Plashet that Mrs. Fry had to attend a meeting I begged to be allowed to accompany her. She kindly took me with her in their family coach. Before we arrived at the place of meeting she turned to me and said, ' Perhaps not a word will be spoken, but thou must not suppose that though we sit in silence our thoughts are not occupied with Divine things.' After entering the building, so long a silence prevailed that I began to think we should depart as we had come without hearing the sound of a human voice. But a Quaker arose and spoke of the great comfort he had received in a time of deep domestic affliction from certain portions of Holy Scripture, which he repeated.

He said no more, and then so long a silence followed I thought the meeting would break up. Then Mrs. Fry herself arose to speak. My own thoughts had been occupied with the words our Lord spoke to His disciples, 'Could ye not watch with me one hour?' It was a pleasant surprise when she said, 'One portion of Scripture has much occupied my mind, the words of our Lord in the hour of suffering, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"' I could not attempt, even if my memory did not fail me, to record the words she spoke, so full of solemn and tender emotion, so touching a commentary on those never-to-be-forgotten words of gentle remonstrance from Him who was about to undergo all the mysterious anguish of the cross. But I have frequently felt that if such edifying instructions were to be often heard at a Quakers' Meeting, I should feel it a high privilege to be present."

An insight into Mrs. Fry's genuine humility and eager desire to be kept free from any reproach that might dim the beauty of a Christian's life is seen in the following touching account in her Journal of her meditation on the difficulties of her position.

"I have felt of late years whether my being made so much of, so much respect paid me by the people in power, in the city, and also being so publicly brought forward, may not prove a

temptation, and lead to something of self-exaltation, or worldly pride. I fear I make the most of myself, and carry myself as if I was somebody amongst them ; a degree of this sort of conduct appears almost necessary, yet oh, the watchfulness required not to bow to men, not to seek to gratify self-love ; but rather in humility and godly fear to abide under the humiliation of the cross. Lord, be pleased so to help and strengthen me in this that for Thine own cause' sake, for my own soul's sake, my beloved family's and the Society's sake, I may in no way be a cause of reproach ; but in my life, conduct and conversation glorify Thy great and ever excellent name. In all my perplexities be pleased to help me and make a way, where I see no way."

CHAPTER VIII.

CAST DOWN BUT COMFORTED.

IN 1825-6 the financial world was in a very disturbed condition. Many houses of business were involved, and not a few collapsed altogether, among the heads of which were some of Mrs. Fry's personal friends.

This tried her sadly with her strong sense of uprightness in all monetary matters, and the complicated difficulties in which her friends were involved. She impressed upon herself afresh the need of holding loosely to the temporal treasures, and having her heart set on those things that cannot be shaken.

She little realised then how soon her own faith would be tested even in a similar direction.

In November 1828, one of the houses of business of which Joseph Fry was a partner, though he did not conduct it personally, failed, involving them all in much sorrow, loss and perplexity. "One of its deepest stings," says Mrs. Fry, "is from the peculiar and perplexing nature of it." The suffering which this great trial brought upon others was a terrible distress to so unselfish a nature.

The sympathy manifested was intense, and letters poured in from all sides, showing in what great esteem she was held. The following from William Wilberforce is typical of the way in which this sorrow was regarded and the sympathy it aroused.

"Farnham Castle,
"29th November, 1828.

"My dear Friend,

"Though my eyes are just now weaker than usual, I must claim a short exercise of their powers for the purpose of expressing to you the warm sympathy which Mrs. Wilberforce and indeed all of my family, as well as myself, are feeling on your account. Yet you, I doubt not, will be enabled to *feel* as well as to *know* that even this event will be one of those which as in your instance are working for good. You have been enabled to exhibit a bright specimen of Christian excellence in *doing* the will of God, and I doubt not, you will manifest a similar specimen in the harder and more difficult exercise of *suffering* it. . . Unto you it is given not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

"Your sincere friend,
"W. Wilberforce."

We can enter somewhat into what it must have been to Mrs. Fry to part with valued servants, who were much attached to her;—

to leave off helping old pensioners, and dependents, and to surrender the control of the schools hitherto supported chiefly by her husband and herself. Generous she had always been, but her maxim often expressed to her children, "Be just before you are generous," had to be put into practice in a self-denying manner, for to give up being generous must have brought her very low indeed.

On the Sunday after this trial it was a question whether or no they should attend meeting. She felt it right to go; and took her usual seat, bowed down with grief, her tears falling during the silence. Then she rose with these words, "Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him," and testified that she could trust in the hour of adversity as well as in the time of prosperity.

Mr. and Mrs. Fry left Plashet at once, and went for a time to their eldest son in St. Mildred's Court. The mercantile business remained to the young men of her family, and with her brothers' help some considerable comfort was afforded her, and her husband.

Her beloved brother Samuel, the banker, upon whom Mrs. Fry leaned at all times, gave hera "The Cedars," in Upton Lane, the garden of which joined the grounds of Ham House, where he resided. The situation was attractive, as the house overlooked Greenwich Park, but

grateful as she was she never seemed able to take root at Upton.

The shock and strain of leaving their beloved home at Plashet told on her health, and she was sick and sad, but never through all did she doubt the mercy of God. She was able to feel His hand guiding her even when she could not understand the road.

Five years after, on visiting Plashet, she went out alone one morning to see her old loved home. It was almost too much for her and the remarks in her Journal are very touching. "When I saw our weedy walks, that once were made and kept up so neatly, our falling summer houses, our beautiful wild flowers that I had cultivated with so much care, and no one to admire them; the place that had cost us so much, and been at times so enjoyed by us, the birth-place of so many of our children, the scene of so many deep and near interests; the tears trickled down my face and I felt ready to enumerate my sorrows and say 'Why is this?' but I felt the check within, and endeavoured to look on the bright side of the picture."

Place, however, she acknowledged is of small importance if we can have that peace which can refresh the weary soul everywhere.

Amidst her sorrows Mrs. Fry was able to turn with much thankfulness to the manifest im-

provements which had taken place through her instrumentality. She expresses her conviction that the Kingdom of God was spreading, and "its blessed and peaceful influence increasing."

Let us take a look at what had been accomplished. Women matrons had been installed in most of the London prisons, work had been provided for the criminals, instruction was being regularly given; the whole management in the way of classification, cleanliness and the treatment of the children had undergone quite a transformation. The behaviour of the women was very satisfactory, and proved the marvellous influence of the regular visits of the ladies who sought in every possible way to raise their thoughts to a higher conception of life. The reforms were not only in and round London. Mrs Fry had visited Nottingham, Lincoln, Wakefield, Doncaster, Sheffield, Leeds, York, Durham, Newcastle, Carlisle, Lancaster, Liverpool, and in these towns committees had been organised for regular visiting.

In Ireland it was the same. Dublin, Armagh, Londonderry, Lisburn, Omagh, Boyle, Sligo, Galway, Waterford, Limerick, Cork, Wicklow and Wexford had been visited.

The kindness shown her in Ireland impressed her very much, and she recalls an amusing instance of the hospitality of the Irish, when one day she and her sister went into a private

house, thinking it was an Inn, and on entering they gave their orders for rooms and that tea might be "served immediately." At last Mrs. Fry discovered her mistake, when she was covered with a sense of humiliation, but she says, "Such was the Irish hospitality, that the lady of the house made us stay, gave us tea, comforted us up and sent us off, not knowing whom she had received."

Mrs. Fry had not, up to this time, visited the Continent, but she had corresponded frequently with the prison authorities in Germany, France, Italy and Russia. The consequence was that a Committee of visiting ladies had been formed in Berlin. In Hamburg so much interest had been aroused that her portrait appeared on one of their almanacs. In France various efforts had been made to improve the condition of the prisons; at Turin a Refuge had been established for penitent females, and her correspondence with those in authority in St. Petersburg is so interesting that we venture to speak rather more fully of it, especially as the Russian prison system is at present so much before the public.

A wish had often been expressed that Mrs. Fry would visit Russia, but that being impossible she kept up continued communication with Mr. Walter Venning, and after his death with his brother John, on the condition of Russian prisons.

Through the letters which passed, the Princess Sophia Mestchersky was induced to form a committee of ladies to visit the women confined in the five prisons in the capital, and a letter which she wrote to Mr. Venning that it might be passed on to Mrs. Fry to cheer her heart, shows us the real interest in those days felt in St. Petersburg in prison reform. The Princess says: "I readily comply with your request and shall try to overcome all the difficulties which ignorance of your language and the novelty of the subject present to me. Not I alone, Sir, but all the ladies of our committee expressed a hearty wish that something of our public exertions, and of our efforts to follow the example which that lady gives, might be communicated to her, as a proof that her labours are blessed from above, and that a spark of that love which animates her generous heart has also reached our distant country, and influenced many hearts with the same Christian feelings for suffering humanity. We will all endeavour to follow her according to the strength and ability granted us, looking for help and hoping for success to and from Him from whom we receive every blessing."

Mrs. Fry in reply, after expressing her heartfelt satisfaction at what had been accomplished, points out the great importance of better prison discipline; "not only that many may be

stopped in their career of vice, but turned from their evil ways, and the security and comfort of the community at large be increased." "Our prisons," she adds, "have been too generally the nurseries of vice and the scenes of idleness, filth and debauchery, when they might be so arranged as to become schools where the most reprobate might be instructed in their duty towards their Creator and their fellow-mortals." Her letter closed, with the exclamation, "How delightful it is to hear of the interest that the Emperor, Prince Galitzin, and ladies of such high rank, take in the cause of the poor prisoners."

The spirit of Mrs. Fry seemed to rest upon the Emperor Nicholas, for Mr. Venning tells us that when accompanying him over the New Litoffsky Prison in 1827, he witnessed a most touching scene on entering the debtor's room. "Three old venerable grey-headed men fell on their knees and cried, 'Father, have mercy on us'; upon which the Emperor, stretched out his hand in the peculiar grandeur of his manner, and said, 'Rise; all your debts are paid; you are this moment free'; without knowing the amount of the debts, one of which was considerable."

Turning to other countries we find great interest had been roused, and committees had been formed in Sweden, also in Zurich, Berne and Basle.

We can gather what these visiting committees meant to the poor prisoners, when we know that a general practice on the Continent was to whip their female prisoners before their trial, the Governor saying on one occasion, "We never have innocent persons here, they are only obstinate, and we soon whip the obstinacy out of them."

No visiting ladies could allow that treatment to last for long, and mercy tempered with justice soon took the place of cruelty and sheer vindictiveness.

All this must have cheered Mrs. Fry's heart, and in addition there were other schemes of hers producing fruit, some of them such as any woman might be glad to have accomplished alone, as the sole memorial of her interest in her fellow creatures. To Elizabeth Fry they seemed but as a small passing effort to help the world to run on its course more smoothly and sweetly.

She had started a "National Guardian Institution" for servants, to encourage them to be faithful in service; and, realising with her keen intuition the need for good mistresses and how much depends upon them, special attention was paid to find out the characters of those who required servants, so that the good mistresses might be rewarded with good servants. In their old age if they belonged to her Institution they were rewarded with a pension of £13 a

year and were placed in the Home. The results were most satisfactory.

Travelling about the country to visit the various Meetings in connection with her Society, Mrs. Fry was led to feel that at the coastguard stations the men were very isolated, and that libraries might be started for them in order to direct their thoughts into useful channels. She had an interview with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and requested that £1,000 should be devoted to the purpose. The government gave £500 at once towards the expenses, and in addition Mrs. Fry obtained private subscriptions and large grants of books from various societies, the value of which amounted in all to over £1,000. Helpers came forward, a Secretary was found, and under her direction the libraries were established. In a very short time 52,464 volumes were in circulation, and she was able to dismiss that subject from her mind; but she was cheered from time to time to find how much the books were appreciated.

Another organization which she started has been crowned with marvellous success, but it was overshadowed in its beginning by the many better known activities of this earnest and benevolent woman and her share in its foundation has been lost sight of. Her frequent attendance at the bedside of the sick and suffering made her realise the need for a class of

well educated and refined women with thorough medical training to nurse the sick.

To see what ought to be done was for Mrs. Fry to do it. She consulted her sister-in-law, Mrs. Samuel Gurney, and together they founded the pioneer institution for nurses, still existing in Bishopsgate. The sisters were dressed in a simple uniform, and when not engaged in service they resided in the "Home." They gave their services gratuitously to the poor.

When Florence Nightingale went out to the Crimean War on her beautiful mission, she took the nurses with her from Mrs. Fry's Institution. Hospital trained nurses are now employed in almost every country of our empire, but it is little known to whom we owe our indebtedness for the initiative which has produced such wonderful and beneficent results.

One other subject should be mentioned, though Mrs. Fry was only very indirectly connected with it; but in looking back and realising how much true progress there was towards common justice, and the happiness of the people, we cannot overlook the exertions of Elizabeth Fry's brother-in-law, Thomas Fowell Buxton, on behalf of the slaves. It is evident that she also took a deep interest in that noble crusade, for we find her addressing a meeting of 3,000 people on behalf of the anti-slavery cause; "It was an honour," she says, "to

appear on the side of the afflicted." On the 28th of August, 1833, the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery throughout all the British colonies, obtained the royal assent, and we can imagine how that would cause Mrs. Fry's tender heart to overflow with thankfulness.

Thus she had much to stimulate her to fresh efforts, though it was enough for her to realise that God accepts the effort put forth for the deed done, and makes us responsible for the endeavour, and not for the success of our labours.

CHAPTER IX.

IN ALL THINGS CHARITY.

NOTHING, perhaps, is more difficult for one—who at the cost of great self-sacrifice has accepted and followed convictions which have been strengthening to the religious life—than to view with satisfaction the following of very different paths by those who are nearest and dearest to them.

Mrs. Fry had from the time that William Savery's address laid hold on her, felt it her duty to be a plain Friend, and her great desire, naturally, was to see her children following in the same path. She had, however, to learn the lesson that there are diversities of operation by which we may approach God and work for Him.

One of her daughters acknowledges with thankfulness how her mother attained the conviction that the scruples of sects may be mistaken for the cross of Christ, and the language of her heart in praying for her children was: "By any ways, or by any paths, that Thou mayst see meet; but let them come to the knowledge of the ever-blessed truth as it is in Jesus."

And in her Journal, she leaves on record: "The longer I live, the more difficult do I see education to be, more particularly as it respects the religious restraints that we put upon our children. I begin seriously to doubt whether it is not better quite to leave sober-minded young people to judge for themselves. I see, I feel, and know that where scruples are adopted from principle, they bring a blessing with them; but, where they are only adopted out of conformity to the views of others, I have very serious doubts whether they are not a stumbling block."

Still it was sad to her that, owing to most of her children having united themselves with the Church of England, they could rarely meet, as a family, in the worship of God. She was too truly catholic to feel otherwise than that God leads His children through various channels, and could honestly say to them, "If having sought to know the will of God as revealed in your hearts by His spirit, and as taught in the Holy Scriptures, your conclusion is that you ought to join yourselves to any other Church than ours, I bid you God-speed in this."

After some deliberation she wrote a circular letter on the subject to her children, so full of "sweet reasonableness," of tender devotion and aspiration for herself and for them that it is worth transcribing in full.

"Upton Lane,
'15th, 8 mo., 1837.

"My dearest children,

"Many of you know that for some time I have felt and expressed the want of our social intercourse at times leading to religious union and communion amongst us. It has pleased the Almighty to permit that by far the larger number of you no longer walk with me in my religious course. Except very occasionally we do not meet together for the solemn purpose of worship and upon some other points we do not see eye to eye, and whilst I feel deeply sensible that notwithstanding this diversity amongst us we are truly united in our Holy Head, there are times when in my declining years I seriously feel the loss of not having more of the spiritual help and encouragement of those I have brought up, and truly sought to nurture in the Lord. This has led me to many serious considerations how the case may under present circumstances be in any way met.

"My conclusion is that believing as we do in one Lord as our Saviour, one Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier, and one God and Father of us all, our points of union are surely strong; and if we are members of one living Church, and expect to be such for ever, we may profitably unite in some religious engagements here below. The world and the things of it occupy us much, and they are rapidly passing away; it would be well if we occasionally set apart a time for unitedly attending to the things of eternity.

"I therefore propose that we try the following plan; if it answers continue it, if not by no means feel bound to it. That our party in the first instance should consist of no others than our children and such grandchildren as may be old enough to attend. That our object in meeting is for the strengthening of our faith, for our advancement in a devoted and religious life and for the

object of promoting Christian love and fellowship. That we read the Scriptures unitedly in an easy familiar manner, each being perfectly at liberty to make any remark or ask any question; that it should be a time of religious instruction by seeking to understand the mind of the Lord for doctrine and practice. That either before or after the Scriptures are read we should consider how far we are really engaged for the good of our fellow men and what, as far as we can judge, most conduces to this object.

"All the members of this little community are advised to communicate anything they may have found useful or interesting in religious books, and to bring forward anything that is being done for the good of mankind in the world generally.

"I hope that thus meeting together may stimulate the family to more devotion of heart to the service of God at home and abroad, and to be active in helping others. It is proposed that this meeting should take place once a month at each house in rotation.

I have now drawn some little outline of what I desire, and if any of you like to unite with me in making the experiment it would be very gratifying to me; still, I hope that all will feel at liberty to do as they think best themselves.

"I am indeed,
"Your nearly attached Mother,
"Elizabeth Fry."

The children fell in with their mother's suggestion, and the gatherings were regularly held, and felt to be helpful and refreshing, and even after their mother was taken from them they continued to meet under the name of *philanthropic evenings*, always closing with the reading of a portion of Scripture.

CHAPTER X.

CONTINENTAL JOURNEYS.

IT is customary when any member of the Society of Friends has a strong sense of some duty to be fulfilled to lay the " concern " before his or her Monthly and Quarterly Meetings for approval or otherwise. If those present feel " unity " with it, a minute or certificate to that effect is given.

Elizabeth Fry felt called upon to pay a visit to France " in the service of Truth," and to extend the reform of prisons to those on the Continent.

When she brought her " concern " before her Meetings the Friends expressed much unity in her visit, and her certificate was signed by an unusually large number of the members of the Society.

Arrangements were then made for her to start on her journey in January, 1838, in the company of her husband and their friends, Josiah Forster and Lydia Irving, both members of the Society.

They went to Boulogne, where they remained the night, and there engaged a carriage to drive them to Abbeville and on to Paris.

The short stay in Abbeville was utilised in visiting a hospital, a convent, and a prison. In their hotel the landlady, her daughter, and some of the servants were pleased to join the travellers in their room, when Mrs. Fry read to them from the New Testament in French, much to their gratification.

From there they drove to Paris and put up at the Hôtel de Castille. They were soon visited by M. and Mdme. de Pressensé, Lord Granville, the English Ambassador, the Duchess of Broglie and many others.

On Sunday they went to M. Pressensé's school of two hundred children which greatly delighted them. Then followed a meeting of Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and various dissenters in the Friends' Meeting-house.

During the following week the prisons of St. Lazare, La Force, the prison des Jeunes Détenus, and the military prison of St. Germains were examined, and when possible a portion of Scripture was read, and a few remarks followed, which were translated. On Mrs. Fry's asking the poor women if they would like to be visited there was a chorus of "Oui, oui" from all parts of the building. Her reading caused quite a

sensation in Paris, and though her words had to be translated, the solemn effect produced was the same everywhere.

Numerous guests were received, and most evenings were spent in dining out. During the month in Paris much was done, and on the journey home Mrs. Fry wrote her impressions to her children as follows :—

"I was at first very poorly. Soon my health revived and we had full occupation in visiting prisons and other institutions, and saw many influential persons. This opened the door in various ways for close communication with a deeply interesting variety of philanthropic and religious people. I have in private circles introduced (frequently by describing what poor criminals wanted in prison) the simple truths of the Gospel, illustrated sometimes by interesting facts respecting the conversion of some of the poor prisoners. It has been striking to me in our dinner visits, some of them splendid occasions, how curiously way has opened without the least formality or even difficulty, to speak the truth in love, especially one day, as to how far balls and theatres were Christian and right. At our own Ambassador's several were in tears during the conversation.

"I think our dinner visits have been an important part of our service, so much has been done by these communications after, and at them. We have had much intercourse with the Minister of Instruction and he gives me leave to send him a large number of books to be translated into French.

"The efforts made to form a Ladies' Society to visit their prisons have been encouraging. First by taking many ladies to visit the Female Prison of St Lazare, and there reading small portions of Scripture and my few

words, through an interpreter, producing such a wonderful effect upon the poor sinners. Many wept exceedingly. I think something important in the prison cause will come out of it, but it will take time.

"Our visit to the King and Queen was interesting but alas! what in reality is rank. I expressed my religious interest and concern for them and it was well received. I think nothing could be more seasonable than our visit, as it respected the prisons, and I believe the influence of our advice has been very decided. The entreaties for us to stop longer in Paris have been very great, but my inclination draws homeward. I am a very great friend to not stopping too long in a place.

"My dearest husband has been a true helper, and Josiah Forster and Lydia very kind and useful companions.

"I am,
"Your most tenderly attached,
"Elizabeth Fry."

She was much impressed with the French character "such a nation—such a superior people—filling such a place in the world, and Satan appearing in no common degree to be seeking to destroy them; yet under all, a hidden power of good at work amongst them, many very extraordinary Christian characters."

On her return home she speaks for the first time of a serious faintness, and wonders if she might be suddenly taken off in one of her attacks, for her heart seemed very weak. But the Divine voice was ever present with her and as with the maid of Rouen, when praying, she

heard a voice saying, " Daughter of God, go, go, go ! I will help thee."

Mrs. Fry's family questioned the wisdom of her engaging in such arduous tasks, and pressed her to think if it was not her call to abide at home and rest in the sweet communion of a united and deeply affectionate family. But the Divine voice can never be resisted. It was for this work that she felt she had been born. God would open up the way. Her heart was so overflowing with loving concern for the suffering everywhere, and such evident blessing rested on her labours, that like her Master, she was prepared to go forward, even unto death.

Her next desire was to revisit Scotland, to inspect the prisons and meet the authorities, whilst a Bill was pending which had been brought before Parliament to improve Scotch prisons and prison discipline.

On this occasion, William Ball, a Minister in the Society, accompanied Mrs. Fry, relieving her of all correspondence and Journal writing. Her capacity for " various successive engagements all of an important nature is astonishing," writes W. Ball from Aberdeen. Another time he says, " She is both lovely and wonderful on close acquaintance; such energy, combined with meekness and so much power, with entire teachableness, are rarely found."

A society was formed in Aberdeen, the ladies being so enthusiastic that when intending to receive a deputation in her sitting room about 200 arrived! The Provost, Sheriff and other gentlemen sought admission, but to their great disappointment were politely dismissed, as she wished to speak to those of her own sex. When the interview was over Mrs. Fry accompanied by a large party of gentlemen went to visit the Bridewell. They made a thorough inspection, and on her return to her hotel she wrote her criticisms and suggestions to the Provost.

Since some of her strong convictions are not yet realised by many even in our own country, and in some other countries in Europe far less so, it is worth while to hear what this woman, of all others most capable of giving wise advice, has to say :—

"I have much satisfaction in observing the great improvement in the construction of the building and the arrangements of the yards since I was last in Aberdeen. The diet has also improved.

"I observe that the separate system is adopted for tried and untried prisoners, that attention is paid to their instruction, that some employment is provided for them, and that upon their dismissal they are allowed to partake of their earnings.

"It is satisfactory also to learn that a medical man and a chaplain attend the prisoners, but above all that it is intended to appoint a female officer to have the oversight and care of the women. This arrangement is under any circumstances important, but peculiarly so when the prisoners are separately confined. There is an obvious impropriety in women so circumstanced being under the sole care of men. A matron will be needed to instruct the prisoners daily, and to have a constant superintendence over them; and one female turnkey under her. They should both reside in the prison, and no male officer, except the Governor and Chaplain, should ever enter the women's side.

"The choice of the officers is of the utmost importance; they should be women of good principles, should possess good sense and education and combine gentleness and firmness. With respect to untried prisoners, several months of separate confinement before trial, and before conviction of any crime, is certainly severe discipline. The introduction of a prison dress has my entire approbation. It tends to promote the comfort of the prisoners during their confinement, and they have the advantage of taking away their own clothes in an unimpaired state when discharged. I beg to press on your attention the great benefits that I believe will result to the female prisoners

from the visits of respectable and discreet ladies who have formed themselves into a Society for this purpose, and who will be subject to regulations which will be submitted for your approval.

" The good that has been produced by similar associations in England is so great and obvious that I need not enlarge upon it."

Edinburgh was visited, Glasgow also and Greenock, where large meetings were held, the places engaged often being too small for the crowds wishing to hear Mrs. Fry. Advice was given about the prisons, associations formed, and on their return home she received a newspaper showing that her suggestions had met with much approval and were already in a fair way of being carried out.

Mrs. Fry's first visit to France had left a strong desire to return for a much longer sojourn in that country. In the year 1839 the way seemed open. Before starting, a family gathering was arranged that the mother might bid her children farewell.

Travelling in those days was no light matter. Conveniences that we are accustomed to did not exist, everything wore an air of uncertainty, and by far the larger portion of the journeys had to be undertaken by coach. Communication with those left behind was very tedious, accommodation often difficult to obtain,

and to travel abroad was some proof of courage and distinction.

At their family gathering sixteen sons and daughters assembled round the table, and thirteen grandchildren joined the company after dinner. At the close of the day, full of hallowed memories, Mrs. Fry records in her Journal: "When I remember all I have passed through on their account, above all the exquisite anxiety about their spiritual welfare, and now so far to see what the Lord has done for me, and for them, What can I say? What can I do? Ought I not to leave them all to His most holy keeping and no longer 'toil and spin' so much for them?"

Baron Bunsen gives us his impression of Mrs. Fry just before this journey was undertaken. "A tall, large figure, about sixty years of age, with eyes small but of sweet and commanding expression—a striking appearance, not plain, but grand rather than handsome. This was Mrs. Fry. When she stopped speaking, I said something of my feeling as to her work of love, and ventured to say, 'I have long asked myself why you could not devise measures for making such great and blessed efforts as yours, for so grand an object, independent of yourself.' My full heart overflowed on the subject. Every word found an echo. How much she said of individual effort is thrown

away in our present individual and separate condition."

The journey contemplated was to include Paris again, then the South of France and other parts of Europe. Mr. and Mrs. Fry and one of their daughters left home in December, and took Abbeville *en route* as before.

When they arrived at their hotel they found the enthusiasm of the servants at seeing them again quite embarrassing. As Mrs. Fry reached her room her maid said, "The people here are craving Testaments, Ma'am." Those given away on the previous visit had been diligently read and then circulated. Nothing delighted Mrs. Fry more than to supply such a demand.

In Paris the friends made on her previous visit gathered round her, and many united with her in revisiting the institutions, in order to see if her suggestions had been carried out. The archbishop, she found, had been much annoyed with her for distributing the Scriptures and urging the perusal of them, though she was always very careful never to oppose the opinions of others or indeed to introduce her own. Baron de Girando, who did not unite in this annoyance, offered to escort her to the hospitals in Paris, and she greatly enjoyed the very free intercourse she had with him in his "charming" company. He was a Roman Catholic, but that did not

interfere with their unity of spirit. She could thoroughly sympathize with him in his difficulty in getting others to help in any matter of moral reform, whereas, he said, anything that appealed to the senses soon attracted helpers, the former bringing a far less noticeable and speedy reward, though of infinitely greater importance. In one hospital for children the babies wrapped so tightly in swaddling clothes, distressed Mrs. Fry greatly. She begged for one poor little mite who was screaming piteously that it might be released, and the nun in charge took off the bandages, whereupon the little one stretched out its tiny limbs in much delight and stopped its wailings. Mrs. Fry's pleadings eventually set all the babies free. Very few seemed able to resist her!

One can understand how with her love of truth and simplicity she felt pained at the images of the Virgin, dressed in their gay and tawdry clothes, as the only outward mark of religion in the wards.

This led her to invite Roman Catholics and Protestants to meet her at the hotel, and they responded graciously, but the task she had set herself was no easy one. She says, "My heart almost sank within me as the time drew near. About sixty came of the very influential Catholics and Protestants, and I was enabled to show them that nothing but the simple

truth as revealed in Scripture, through the power of the Holy Spirit, could enlighten the understanding." Much satisfaction was expressed.

From Paris they travelled to Fontainebleau, then to Lyons, Avignon and Nismes. There they found the prisoners were of such a desperate character that the authorities concealed armed soldiers near by, in case any attempt was made on the lives of the visitors. But there was no need. The absence from fear, the calm loving manner of their guest, completely won their hearts. One who was chained both by his hands and feet so touched Mrs. Fry's heart that she pleaded for him and his companion that they might be released from their fetters. Her request was granted, the result in his after conduct being most satisfactory.

Many of the prisoners were gathered together afterwards; they sang a hymn and then Mrs. Fry spoke in a most touching way of Mary Magdalene, her loving much because forgiven much. This was a favourite subject with her, and Thomas Carlyle refers to hearing her read that story in Newgate "with those silvery tones of hers." It went from the heart to the hearts of her hearers, "Mrs. Fry looking like a little spot of purity in a great sweltering mass of corruption," as he says. It was so at Nismes.

Many thanked her at the close of her address, and a touching little letter was sent to her at the hotel afterwards from one of the prisoners, showing their appreciation of her words of truth and tenderness.

Nismes le 19 Mai, 1839.

"Très-honorée Dame,

"La visite que vous avez bien voulue faire à de malheureux prisonniers, a été pour beaucoup de nous un grand sujet de consolation. Les paroles, pleines de bienveillance et de bonté que vous nous avez adressées, se sont profondément gravées dans nos cœurs.

"Nous sommes si peu accoutumés à voir des personnes étrangères et jouissant d'une considération si distinguée, et en même temps, si bien méritée, plaindre notre sort et nous offrir des consolations, que nous regrettons bien vivement de ne pouvoir souvent être honorés de vôtre visite.

"Ah! s'il vous était possible, madame, de nous voir encore une fois, et d'assister dimanche prochain au service divin, vous nous combleriez de joie. Car nous pensons que vos prières jointes aux nôtres, ne pourraient manquer d'etre agréables à Dieu, et qu'il nous donnerait la force et le courage nécessaires pour imiter nôtre Sauveur Jésus-Christ, qui s'est immolé pour nous en supportant les plus affreux tourmens avec patience, et en priant son Père de pardonner à ceux qui le faisaient mourir.

"Daignez, honorée Dame,
"Recevoir mes humbles respects,
"Vôtre très-obéissant serviteur,
"M————."

It is refreshing to find that Mrs. Fry allowed herself some rest in Congénies, at Marseilles

and Hyères, and from thence travelled to the Pyrenees where the delightful air fresh from the snowy mountains, the flowers of spring and summer, the olive groves and vineyards, made her sing for joy at the wonderful works of God. But she was always on the look out for some service, going to see a sick woman whose son rowed her on the lake of Brienz, and spoke of his mother's sufferings; speaking to the little children, in the hotels where she rested; strengthening the faith of several *pasteurs* she met at Lausanne; always sowing seeds of kindness and lovingly presenting the truth to any who were prepared to listen.

On her return home she wrote: "I have had very satisfactory letters from the Continent, in which it appears, in various ways, that our visit has been blessed in many places; committees have been formed to visit prisoners; the prisons are improved. The minds of prisoners appear to have been seriously impressed, encouragement given to some who wanted it, and, I trust, by what I hear, many stimulated in their progress heavenward."

The party returned home in September, and in January of the following year Mrs. Fry was called to visit her Majesty. The young Queen was about to be married to Prince Albert. She had sent Mrs. Fry £50 for the Chelsea Refuge and wished to see her. In the company of

William Allen she went to Buckingham Palace. The Queen questioned her about the Refuge she had founded, which gave Mrs. Fry an opportunity of thanking her, and she expressed at the same time her satisfaction that the Queen encouraged various works of charity and referred to the words, " With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful."

Again in 1840, Mrs. Fry's thoughts turned to the Continent with a desire to follow up the suggestions made on her former visits, and in the company of several of her relations, her brother Samuel, his wife and daughter, a niece, and a friend, she suggested going on a crusade to Belgium, Holland and Germany.

When it became known that she intended undertaking this journey, letters came to her from the Queen of Prussia and Princess William, expressing their great satisfaction at the proposed visit. Mrs. Fry and her party took their carriage on board the steam-boat to Ostend, and had a voyage of eleven hours, the waves contrary, the wind high, but happily the sun was shining brilliantly.

On their arrival at Ostend they found an order from the Belgian Government to visit their prisons. This they undertook ; also visiting an English Convent where Elizabeth Fry spoke very strongly against their " shutting-in " system, liable as she said to such great abuse.

Then they went on to Brussels, where they received on arrival an invitation to dine with the Comte de Merode, the first Roman Catholic family in the city, but an intimation was given that no preaching could be allowed. The Dean, the head of the Church in the City, seated himself by Mrs. Fry, and by degrees all the party gathered round them, when the conversation became perilously near the religious question. She began by giving information regarding prisons and prevention of crime, speaking of the way in which the upper classes were often the cause of the sins of the working classes—brave woman that she was —and then turning to the Dean she said, "Will the Dean allow me to speak my mind candidly." His permission being given, and that of the Count and Countess, she began by expressing the sincere interest that she felt for the inhabitants of the city, and how much she had been desiring for them that as a people they might each place less confidence in men and in the forms of religion, and look to Christ with an entire and simple faith. The priest said nothing, but turned the subject as soon as possible, and asked what the views of the Quakers were, upon which Josiah Forster gave them a short account in French which appeared to interest them all.

Amsterdam was visited, then Rotterdam, at both of which places prisons were inspected.

In one the poor untried prisoners were chained to the ground till they confessed their crimes, whether they had committed them or not; in another upwards of four hundred poor creatures, heavily chained, were intensely moved at the sympathy expressed by Mrs. Fry as she glided about amongst them as an angel of light, from a purer, sweeter world than they had had any experience of.

Various meetings were held, curious gatherings at times, such as one when a Jew spoke, another Jew prayed, Mrs. Fry read and spoke on love, and then some Pietists took part—"the serious, the sweet, the good and the ludicrous, curiously mixed up together," being Mrs. Fry's comment.

Then they made their way to Berlin where they received a most cordial welcome. In the Hôtel de Russie they found a large room capable of holding 200 persons, which suited Mrs. Fry admirably. The reception by the Royal family was most gratifying, as it paved the way for much intercourse with those who have the power to help forward the cause of the oppressed.

Soon after their arrival a meeting was held in the hotel. Professor Tholück acted as interpreter, and there was a large gathering of the "higher" classes.

Her niece, Elizabeth Gurney, describes the scene thus:

"It is impossible to give an idea of the intense eagerness and interest when my aunt arose. Papa having introduced her to the assembly, she began by describing the deplorable state of the London prisons when she was young, her own first entering those horrid abodes, the clamour that every one raised about her venturing to go alone and unprotected, the abominable filth and depravity of the prisoners themselves, the violence of the prisoners especially the females, so great that even the turnkeys scarcely dared venture amongst them; and then very simply, she told how she and her companions were received, of their taking clothes for the children, and of the respect with which the prisoners soon welcomed them. Then she went on to express her own feeling about the introduction of Christianity amongst them and her questionings with herself. Would it be possible to touch their hearts by religious truth? Can I venture to read the Holy Scriptures to them? What will happen?

"The whole assembly seemed to hang upon her words. Even those who could not understand English appeared to gather something by watching her and listening to her voice, and to follow her as she went on to give instances of the good that had been effected by the visiting ladies, such as the introduction of public worship amongst the prisoners, and the institution of matrons. Most eloquent was the appeal with which she ended, earnestly calling upon those present to help in the work, to lend their aid in the rescue of sinners, and to take an interest in their eternal welfare.

"Every one," Elizabeth goes on to say, "wants to know about our aunt's history. Where does she live? Is she married? And their astonishment is great when I tell them of five-and-twenty grand-children, though it seems only to add to the respect paid her.

"Princess William has been desirous to give her sanction to the Ladies' Committee for visiting the prisoners

that my aunt has been forming; and to show her full approbation, inviting the Committee to meet her at the Palace. So you may imagine twenty ladies assembled here at our hotel at half past twelve to-day and going on with us to the palace, whither the Princess had also invited some of her friends so that we must have been forty in number, with Count Gröben as interpreter. When we reached the palace, chocolate was served, which occupied the time till the arrival of the Crown Princess. Then our aunt was placed in the middle of the sofa with the Crown Prince and Princess, and Princess Charles on her right and Princess William, Princess Marie and Princess Czartoryski, on her left, and a table was placed before her with pens, ink and paper, exactly as in other committees. She read to the assembly the rules which she had drawn up, and which Countess Bohlen had translated into German, and she afterwards gave a concise account of similar societies in England.

"When business was over, our aunt mentioned some texts which she would read if she had a Bible. 'Run Marie and fetch one,' said the Crown Prince in English. But little Princess Marie only brought a German Bible. However the Crown Prince took it, looked out the text in Isaiah lvii. which our aunt had selected, 'Is not this the part that I have chosen?' etc., and Count Gröben read it. Then our aunt said, 'Will the Prince and Princess allow a moment for prayer?' and all stood, whilst she knelt down in their midst and offered one of her most touching heartfelt prayers for 'a blessing' upon the town, from the King upon the throne to the prisoners in the dungeon, and afterwards for the ladies, that they might be prospered and helped in the work they had undertaken to perform. Afterwards when many of the ladies had retired, we were left almost alone for half-an-hour with the Royal family who showed us the utmost kindness and desired us to come again to see them before we left Berlin."

Mrs. Fry had the Lutheran Church much on her mind and was anxious to ascertain if the former persecution prevailed. She found that though the condition of things had somewhat improved there was terrible oppression existing. This matter she felt must be brought before the King. It is not very surprising to find that our Ambassador, though very kindly disposed towards Mrs. Fry, strongly discouraged her from attempting to do anything in the matter. She did not, however, give up her hope of speaking on their behalf, and on unexpectedly meeting the Crown Prince she felt her prayer was answered, that God had made an opening, and she was not one to let an opportunity slip by. His Royal Highness listened most attentively and urged her to do as she believed to be right. A petition had been drawn up by William Allen, it was translated into German, and presented to His Majesty. It was no easy matter but she committed her cause to Him who was guiding her, and was able patiently to await the result. "The following day," we read in her *Life*, "the King's Chaplain was the bearer of the delightful intelligence, that the petition had been graciously received, and that the King had said that 'he thought the Spirit of God must have helped them to express themselves as they had done.' She told this gentleman what a subject of prayer it had been

with her ; to which he rejoined that ' like Daniel her petition had been answered before she had ceased praying.' "* The visit was drawing to an end and we see how filled her moments were.

" Great numbers of people came to call at the hotel, no doubt partly from curiosity to see our aunt," her niece says, " but when they have once come, they seem to continue as if spell-bound in her train, and to wish to aid her in everything. This morning there is to be a Committee ; and then at twelve o'clock our aunt will be ' at home ' to take leave of her friends ; then they go to the Minister of the Interior to talk about prisons ; and then the ladies have to be introduced to the prisoners on the occasion of their first visit. In the evening a number of people come here, besides which there is an institution to be visited. To-morrow we take leave at the Palace, and have two Committees, so we shall have work up to the last moment."

The deeply weighty exercises at Berlin had so exhausted her that Mrs. Fry had to rest a

* In the seventeenth century the Lutherans persecuted the Pietists. In the eighteenth century the Prussian government tried to unite the Lutherans and the Reformed Churches into one national Church. The old Lutherans opposed this scheme and showed their hostility to the government who, in its turn, persecuted them. Greater toleration was practised after Mrs. Fry's visit, and in time the old Lutherans were recognised as an ecclesiastical body in Prussia.

few days at Leipzig with her maid, whilst the rest visited Dresden. She speaks of a quiet time and much refreshment and the great kindness of many friends who visited her.

Then they made their way home by Liège, Antwerp, and Ostend, and Mrs. Fry, on reaching Upton says: "I return in a delicate state of health and very weak in spirits, but deeply feeling my Lord's mercies towards me."

CHAPTER XI.

THE THRONE AND THE DUNGEON.

LIFE on her return was full of overwhelming interest, and the engagements of one day will show how crowded the hours were. The morning began with a meeting of Friends in London, afterwards she waited upon the Duchess of Gloucester, had a short interview with the Duke of Sussex, and returned to Upton to meet at Ham House—the residence of her brother Samuel—the American delegates who had come to England on the subject of slavery.

Sickness among her family, interviews with representatives from Africa, entertaining naval officers, writing her views on Prison Discipline, and nursing several relations, filled up her weeks till she had a fresh feeling that it was her duty to visit the Continent again. This desire was roused partly by an innumerable number of letters continually arriving urging her to go and complete the work she had begun. We see her questioning herself as to the right call.

" Am I called again or not ? " and praying that the way might be made plain, being " willing to go or to stay, to do or to suffer, to be something or nothing." Among those who urged her to go were the Queen of Prussia and Princess William.

At length she felt it her duty to undertake the journey though far from strong, and in the company of her brother Joseph, his daughter, and her niece Elizabeth, she started.

Arriving at Rotterdam, where they spent a quiet Sunday, Mrs. Fry writes: " You will like to know that I have much evidence that I am in my right place. Our visits to the boys' prisons and to the women's prisons were highly interesting. I find a second visit to a place much better than a first."

From Rotterdam, Mrs. Fry and her brother proceeded to the Hague, sending on letters to the King from Prince Albert. A message was conveyed to the travellers, requesting them to wait upon the King and Queen. The visit lasted over an hour. Pleasant conversation passed about the prison visits, the King asking many questions of Mrs. Fry as to how she had managed to accomplish so much with her large family.

Then she laid before him her brother's desire to speak on his visit to the West Indies, and permission was granted. He spoke of slavery

and slave-holding, describing the scenes he had witnessed, and the King was so touched that he said he would put a stop to it. After this he took Mrs. Fry by the hand, and said he hoped God would bless her and her companions, and they in their turn expressed the desire that the blessing of the Almighty might rest on the King, the Queen and their children.

They spent four days at Amsterdam, visiting the prisons and lunatic asylums and various public institutions, besides holding religious and philanthropic meetings. They found one poor creature in a prison, unclothed, lying on some straw chained to a post. As far as she could drag herself along she approached Mrs. Fry, and on gaining her hand kissed it again and again most passionately, and then burst into tears. Such a woman was open to the highest influences of love, and much might have been done for her by kind and just treatment.

To her husband Mrs. Fry writes from Amsterdam: "Our interview at the Hague with the King and Queen was an interesting event in my life. I wore a dark plain satin with a new fawn coloured silk shawl. The King, a lively, pleasant gentlemanlike man, was in regimentals. The Queen, who is sister to the Emperor of Russia, is a fine, stately woman. She wore a white morning dress and the Princess was dressed like her.

"The King began a familiar and pleasant conversation with me about my prison work. I told him briefly the history of it. . . I was helped to speak very boldly, though respectfully, strongly laying before the King the state of prisons in the Netherlands, and expressing my hope that his reign would be marked by their reformation, and by the liberation of the slaves in his colonies."

From Amsterdam the journey was a trying one, the roads rough and fatiguing, the sand reaching at times to the axle-tree, and Mrs. Fry was very unwell and had to put up with most miserable accommodation at night till they reached Bremen, where they rested for the Sunday in comfortable quarters. But one whose name had long been "a word of beauty" was not to pass through without some word to the people. A meeting had been arranged in the museum to which, long before the appointed time, crowds had gathered, and the impression produced is best told by a gentleman who wrote to her: "Now I am more than convinced that you are sent to us by the Lord, to be, and to become, a great blessing and a salt to our city."

The poor people crowded round her carriage the morning she left, and they could not be induced to move away till their "dear lady" had shaken hands with them all.

From Copenhagen Mrs. Fry sent a full account of what she felt to be a very important and interesting mission. A few extracts from this letter may still be of interest: "The Queen is certainly a most delightful woman as well as a truly Christian and devoted character. She took me in her carriage to her infant school; it really was beautiful to see her surrounded by the little children, and to hear her translating what I wished to say to them. . . The following morning we regularly began our prison visiting; very sad scenes we witnessed in some of them. We saw hundreds of persons confined for life in melancholy places; but what occupied our most particular attention was the state of the persecuted Christians. We found Baptist ministers, excellent men, in one of the prisons; and that many others of this sect have suffered much in this country is clear for there is hardly any religious toleration. . . The King and Queen were kind enough to invite us all to dine at their palace in the country. This was a very serious occasion as we had so much to lay before the King—slavery in the West Indies, the condition of the persecuted Christians here, and the sad state of the prisons. I was so weighed down with the importance of the opportunity, that I could hardly enjoy the beautiful scene. We arrived about a quarter past three; the Queen met us with the utmost kindness and condescen-

sion and took us a walk in their lovely grounds. When our walk was finished we were shown into the drawing room to the King, who met us very courteously; several were there in attendance. Dinner was soon announced; imagine me, the King on one side and the Queen on the other, and only my poor French to depend upon; but I did my best to turn the time to account. . . The afternoon was very entertaining, the King and Queen took us to the drawing room window where we were to see a large school of orphans, *protégés* of the Queen. I took advantage of this opportunity and laid the state of the prisons before the King, telling him at the same time that I had a petition for him which I meant to make before leaving the palace; and I did entreat the King for the poor Baptists in prison, and for religious toleration. I must say their kindness was very great to me, and I believe that we were sent to Copenhagen for a purpose."

At Hanover Mrs. Fry speaks of her great joy at finding the late Queen had had all the chains knocked off the poor prisoners at Hameln, and her delight at the sight of seeing their happy grateful faces and hearing that they had behaved so well. That was enough to make her cup run over with thanksgiving.

In another prison, during that journey, the success of her former importunity seems mar-

vellous. On referring to it afterwards she says : " I found more than a thousand prisoners (mostly confined for small crimes) loaded with chains. I was so touched by their misery that it tempted me to represent to the Queen and the government the cruelty and injustice of their treatment. A few weeks after, when I visited the prison again, I saw to my pleasure and surprise that my remonstrance had been listened to, and the chains were taken off all the prisoners, except one most unruly man. I suppose they knew through whom they were freed from their chains, for I can never forget their expressions of joy and gratitude at seeing me."

Another instance is given of a visit she paid to a prison which produced an amusing result. The second time Mrs. Fry entered she was astonished at seeing quite a number of little leaden images of the Virgin. On mentioning that they were not there when she paid her former visit she was told that after her departure they were all so impressed with the importance of religion that they had each *bought* a *Virgin !*

In the last letters home, Mrs. Fry let her loved ones know something of what the journey had cost her : " This is probably the last time I shall ever be here again," she says, " for I find the roughs of the journey are, with all my numerous indulgences, far too much for

me, and I often feel very nearly ill. I think through all I have seldom had more reason to believe that I have been called to any service, but we have been so much limited for time as to make the press in travelling too great for my strength. . . I have had a considerable stiffness in my limbs so that I am obliged to be assisted to walk up stairs and helped into the carriage by one or two men. . . I have sometimes thought that after being so helped on my way from the palace to the prison, it was likely that the poor instrument should need a little further refining and purifying, for our works are to be tried as by fire.

"We travel with six horses to make the greatest speed home. I have a board in the carriage that when your uncle and Anna are outside I can quite rest and make a real sofa of it when I need it. Often in my wakeful, and at times distressing nights, a sweet peace comes over me to calm my troubled spirit. We hear from newspapers that the poor Baptists in Copenhagen are to be released from prison, a small sum being paid by way of fine. What a comfort! and the poor Lutherans in Prussia say they are now so well off that they do not wish us to ask for any more liberty for them of the King."

After this they hastened home by way of Ostend, and landed at Dover on the 2nd of October.

CHAPTER XII.

NOTABLE PEOPLE.

THE long continental journey had been in many respects one of great suffering, and though from her letters Joseph Fry was prepared for a change when he met his wife at Dover, he was deeply grieved at the distressing state in which he found her. It was clear to all that the excessive activity would have to be in a measure laid aside, though it was hoped that with care she would be "strengthened in mind and body to do the Lord's work when and where He pleased." She was now able to enter into the tokens which came to her continually of the result of her labours.

A letter came from Pasteur Feldner telling of the great improvement among the prisoners at Jauer. A hundred Bibles had been purchased by them out of their earnings, and in some cases the authorities gave them as a reward for good conduct.

Another letter related how permission had been granted for ladies to visit the prison at Lübeck, and at Hanover a Society had been established for visiting and relieving the sick poor.

During 1841, Sir John Pirie held the office of Lord Mayor, and as his wife had been one of Mrs. Fry's best workers at Newgate they desired that during their year of office everything should be done to assist prison reform as far as possible. For this end they sought to bring Mrs. Fry into touch with those who could help in such a work, if only their hearts could be moved to sympathise with the sufferings of the prisoners. With Mrs. Fry's marvellous power of calling forth the best in human nature and attracting others to love her, she was naturally their sheet anchor in this enterprise. Physically she was not then capable of her former exertions, but we see she was ready to respond, not counting her life dearer to her than the lives of many who were more suffering and in great distress. Thus we see in her Journal :—

"11. i. 1842. The Lady Mayoress has been here again to-day to see if there is any prospect of my going to the Mansion House, according to the warm desire they have expressed, to meet Prince Albert, the Duke of Wellington, and our different ministers. I feel it a very weighty matter for my body, mind and spirit, and do very earnestly crave direction and preservation in it, that if I go, my way may be made very plain, and that my Lord may be with me there.

"14*th*. As the time approaches I feel this prospect very much. Grant me wisdom from above to do all in wisdom and discretion."

All seemed to go well. She tells us she had an important conversation about a female prison then being built, with Sir James Graham, the Secretary of State. With Lord Aberdeen, Foreign Secretary, she spoke of matters connected with the state of the Continent, and with Lord Stanley the Colonial Secretary, upon the state of the penal colonies and the condition of women in them. "Nearly the whole dinner," she says, "was occupied in deeply interesting conversation with Prince Albert and Sir Robert Peel. With the Prince I spoke very seriously upon the Christian education of their children, the management of their nursery, the infinite importance of a holy and religious life; how I had seen it in all ranks of life: no real peace or prosperity without it. Then the advancement of religion in the continental Courts. Then prisons: their present state in this country, my fear that our punishments were becoming too severe, my wish that the Queen should be informed of some particulars respecting separate confinement, etc., etc.

"We also had some entertaining conversation about my journeys, the state of Europe, habits of countries, modes of living, etc. With Sir Robert Peel I dwelt much more on the prison subject;

I expressed my fears that gaolers had too much power, that punishment was rendered uncertain and often too severe; pressed upon him the need of mercy and begged him to see the new prison and to have the dark cells a little altered."

In 1842, the King of Prussia came to England to be sponser to the infant Prince of Wales. Mrs. Fry, who had been much impressed with the kindness shown her when in Prussia was by his desire invited to meet him at the Mansion House on Sunday morning after he had attended the service at St. Paul's. "The luncheon was a cold one. Mrs. Fry sat by the King, the Lord Mayor being on the other side of him. Mrs. Fry leant back and said to the Lord Mayor, 'We must have no toasts to-day.' 'Oh, Ma'am,' said the Lord Mayor, 'we must have one to the Queen and one to the King.' 'No; remember it is the First-day; we must not have any to-day,' said Mrs. Fry.

"The King overheard, and said, 'Yes, Mrs. Fry, you are quite right, we must have no toasts to-day.'

"'Then wilt thou strengthen the Lord Mayor's hands?' said Mrs. Fry to the King. 'No, Ma'am, his hands do not need strengthening; a word from you is quite enough.' And the King told Mrs. Fry she was the best friend he had in the world, and that he should not

think of leaving England till he had paid her a visit at her own house.

"The next day the King went with Mrs. Fry and Samuel Gurney to see Newgate, in which he was very much interested. Mrs. Fry read out of some book to the prisoners and afterwards a psalm, and then prayed very touchingly, the King and the prisoners kneeling around her, all *equally* in tears."

Many difficulties were raised about the King's determination to visit Mrs. Fry at Upton, but he persevered, and it was arranged that after the visit to Newgate he should follow her and take luncheon with her and her family.

Mrs. Fry hastened home in advance so as to receive her royal guest on his arrival, and tells us she went down to meet the King at the carriage door with her husband and sons. "I then walked with him into the drawing room, where all was in most beautiful order, neat and adorned with flowers. I presented to the King our eight daughters and daughters-in-law, our seven sons and eldest grandson, my brother and sister Buxton, and my sister-in-law Elizabeth, and afterwards presented twenty-five of our grandchildren.

"We had a solemn silence before our meal, which was handsome and fit for a king, yet not extravagant. I sat by the King, who appeared to enjoy his dinner, perfectly at his ease and

very happy with us. We went into the drawing room after another solemn silence, and a few words which I uttered in supplication for the King and Queen. We found a deputation of Friends with an address to read to him; this was done and the King appeared to feel it much; then we had to part, the King expressing his desire that blessings might continue on our house."

Mrs. Fry's eldest son was at this time appointed a magistrate, the office being as she told him a very weighty and important one. She entered so keenly into all the interests of her children that she wrote to him fully on the subject, giving very wise advice on becoming well acquainted with the laws, and at the same time reminding him of the power left in the hands of the Magistrates for good or evil, too many being influenced "by selfishness, party spirit or partiality." Crime, she points out, may be increased by punishment and offenders become hardened, especially in the case of young people, who should be got into Refuges when possible, so as to amend their ways.

As Mrs. Fry did not improve in health it was arranged that she should leave London for a time, and her brother-in-law lent her his house at Cromer where she could enjoy the beautiful sea views. Northrepps Hall, Sheringham, and Cromer Hall were within easy reach, which

brought her into close touch with her beloved relatives the Buxtons. One visitor at Northrepps wrote to a friend, "I am not enthusiastic when I say Northrepps Hall is, as it were, the very gates of heaven."

Though resting, Mrs. Fry was not idle. Having taken a very deep interest in the female convict ships, and on hearing of disgraceful scenes which occurred during their journeys, Mrs. Fry was convinced of the necessity of obtaining female officers to be on board to receive the prisoners, and remain in charge of them throughout the voyage.

A ship was about to proceed to Van Diemen's Land with 205 female prisoners, and after obtaining the sanction of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, for Matrons to accompany them, a search was made for suitable women. This was not a very easy matter, as special qualifications were necessary, and some who possessed them shrank from the office and declined to go. At last two ladies were appointed, and Mrs. Fry's letter to the lady at the head of the Ship Committee is characteristic and admirable.

"Cromer,
"8 mo., 27th. 1842.

"My beloved Friend,

"Thy note received to-day has been a real comfort to me; the post brought some sorrows, and thy note brought weight in the other scale; but I have sat at home

weeping, as I did not feel much inclined to meet a delightful party of brothers, sisters, etc., at my brother Buxton's, but rather to sit alone and look to my own vineyard, and my own very deep interests in my family and my beloved friends, and for the causes that are near my heart. I humbly thank my heavenly Father, who has regarded our very unworthy prayers and raised up those we trust may be suitable in the convict-ship and helpful in the colony; may grace and wisdom from above be poured forth upon them; may they remember that the servants of the Lord must prove their faith more by *conduct* than word or profession; they must avoid anything like religious *cant*, if I may so express myself, and in an upright, holy, self-denying and watchful deportment, be preachers of righteousness, and prove who it is that they believe in, serve and obey. I am often inexpressibly bound and brought low in spirit when I look at the standard and holy example of our blessed Lord, and then behold my own shortcoming. I long for a closer walk with God, for myself and all whom I love; and that through the help of the Holy Spirit, we should more constantly prove our love to Him who died for us, and loved us with an everlasting love. Pray impress on these matrons the extreme importance of their prudent and circumspect conduct, as it respects the gentlemen on board; and towards the women the need of sound discretion and the meekness of wisdom; and amongst all, to be wise as serpents, harmless as doves, and to be pitiful and courteous. I quite feel my indulgent life and am very ready to work when my Lord may enable me. I do not desire to save myself unless duty calls me to do it; indeed, dear friend, I have always felt it an honour I have been unworthy of, to do anything for my Lord, and to be made an instrument of good to my fellow-creatures. I have been thankful for thy letters, because they have encouraged me to hope that you are not

discouraged, but that the Spirit of our God is poured forth upon my beloved friends, to help them in this weighty and important work, and to make them willing to labour in this service, and for the good of their poor fellow mortals. My dear love to all our sisters in this service, and I am truly, in gospel bonds,

"Thy attached friend,

"Elizabeth Fry."

Mrs. Fry arranged that every woman on leaving the prison should be provided with a Bible, apron, cap, bag, tape, pins, needles, cotton, worsted, thimble, scissors, spectacles where needed, comb, and knife and fork.

"A heart at leisure from itself" expresses the daily attitude of love in which Elizabeth Fry lived. Her thoughts seemed to turn to herself, only as she remembered her own weakness, and prayed for Divine power rightly to handle the many interests her active brain had devised for the well-being of others. The needy, the suffering, the helpless were guided and comforted and continually led into paths of peace. Even in the minute cares and joys of life she was ever ready with a word of help, prompt in any emergency, softening anger, reproving in such a manner that the froward was made tender to receive counsel, and carrying with her always an atmosphere of peace and love, so that we do not wonder at Pastor Mallet speaking of her name as a "word of beauty" to us.

Mrs. Fry returned home in the autumn refreshed in spirit and "never more bright and lovely" as her daughters tell us. But she returned to a scene of sorrow, her little grandchild Harriet, barely eight years old, was dying. The child did not linger long, and on a bright winter's day Mrs. Fry accompanied the sorrowing mother to the grave. At the close of the Church of England service, and after a pause, a gentle voice was heard, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

Having somewhat recovered in health, after a winter of less activity, it was again felt by Mrs. Fry that she must return to the Continent once more, particularly with the object of going to Paris.

She must have known herself that it would be her last long journey, as she writes at the commencement of the year, "It appears to me that mine is rather a rapid descent into the valley of old age."

Some matters of importance that had not been completed in Paris, made her very anxious to embrace an opportunity for usefulness that was opened to her, so she laid aside all fear and decided to undertake the journey.

CHAPTER XIII.

JOURNEYINGS AND SUFFERINGS.

IN the spring of 1843, with her eldest daughter, and in the company of her brother Joseph John, his wife and Josiah Forster, Mrs. Fry started for the last time to the continent.

The voyage to Boulogne was so trying from a heavy sea and cold weather that her companions urged her return home. But her heart was set on accomplishing her purpose, and after a rest she went on to Amiens, remaining there over the Sunday.

In the midst of a large Roman Catholic population and under the shadow of one of the finest Cathedrals in Europe, closely surrounded by houses, Mrs. Fry found a room used by a Protestant pastor and there she worshipped, many Roman Catholics being present, and expressing themselves afterwards as having been much helped and encouraged. At Clermont-en-Oise the party were permitted to inspect the great prison for women which was under the care of a Supérieure and twenty-two

nuns. The prisoners were found working in large cheerful rooms, one hundred together and they were allowed to unite in singing hymns. All this delighted Mrs. Fry's heart, the general management being excellent. She asked if she might see the nuns alone. To leave the women whom they closely watched, seemed impossible, but she was taken to an apartment where a number were assembled in their grey dresses. The Supérieure held Mrs. Fry's hand, and Catherine was asked to interpret for her mother.

"It was no easy matter," she says, "to convey exactly my mother's address on the importance of maintaining, not only good discipline amongst the prisoners, but endeavouring to lead them in living faith to Christ, as the only Mediator between God and man, and through whom alone they could be cleansed from the guilt and power of sin. At His name every head bowed. She then went on to tell of Newgate and the effects of the gospel there; many tears were shed at this recital. She concluded by a lively exhortation to these devoted nuns, whom she could, 'salute as sisters in Christ,' to go forward in their work, but in no way to rest upon it, as in itself meritorious. Here the Supérieure interposed, 'Oh, non, mais il y a un peu de mérite, l'homme a de mérite en ce qu'il fait'; an old nun, who probably understood English, rejoined, 'Ma

mère, Madame thinks that if the love of God does not sufficiently animate the heart to do it without feeling it a merit, or desiring reward, it falls short.' 'Ah, c'est bien! comme elle est bonne,' replied the Supérieure." Mrs. Fry was allowed to conclude with a short blessing and prayer in French.

On reaching Paris she was so low in health that she felt frightened at what the consequences might be of accomplishing the work she had planned.

Rest was taken, and for a time she felt better able to renew her efforts, and nothing could keep her, when able, from engaging in some work for the definite good of others. Her constant attitude of mind and heart is well expressed in that beautiful hymn of the Brahmins :—

"It is not blessedness to know that thou thyself art blessed:
True joy was never yet by one, nor yet by two possessed.
Not to the many is it given, but only to the all:
The joy that leaves one heart unblessed would be for mine too small."

M. Guizot at the head of the Cabinet, was a man who was in much sympathy with any reform for the benefit of the people. "Unblemished in personal character, exemplary in private life, and professing the Reformed faith," he was one from whom Mrs. Fry was

very confident of receiving much sympathy in her endeavours to carry out some reforms.

On the 25th of April she and her daughter arrived at the Tuileries, to meet by appointment, the Duchess of Orleans. The daughter gives us a description of what occurred.

" We were ushered into an immense drawing-room, the size and heavy crimson and gold magnificence of which exceeded any room I had ever seen. On a sofa about half way up the room was seated a young lady in deep mourning, over whose black and white cap hung a large long crêpe scarf that reached the ground on either side, her figure tall and elegant, her face and features small and delicate, her eyes blue and her complexion very fair—a lovely blush came and went as she spoke. From her dress and appearance none could for a moment doubt that it was the widow of the heir of France. Opposite to her sat an elderly lady, the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg, her step-mother, who had brought her up from childhood. . . The conversation at first was upon the Duchess of Orleans' affliction. Mrs. Fry read to them a few verses and commented on them, on affliction and its peaceable fruits afterwards. It was an hour and a half before this interesting conversation came to a close."

A few days after, a dinner was arranged by

M. Guizot to which Mrs. Fry was invited. "Seated by her celebrated host this dinner was felt to be an occasion of great responsibility. Mrs. Fry was encouraged by his courteous attention unreservedly to speak to him on the subject which had so long been near to her heart. It was no common ordeal for a woman, weak even in her strength, to encounter reasoning powers and capabilities such as his; their motives of action arising probably from far different sources, but seriously meeting at the same point; hers from deep-rooted benevolence, directed by piety in its most spiritual form; his from reflection, observation and statesman-like policy, guided by philanthropy, based on philosophy and established conviction; yet in the aggregate the result is the same; an intense desire to benefit and exalt human nature, and arrest the progress of moral and social evil, and an equal interest in ascertaining the most likely methods of effecting the desired end. They spoke of crime in its origin, its consequences, and the measures to be adopted for its prevention; of the treatment of criminals; of education and of Scriptural instruction. Here Mrs. Fry unhesitatingly urged the diffusion of Scriptural truth and the circulation of the Scriptures, as the one means capable alone of controlling the power of sin and shedding light upon the darkness of superstition and infidelity."

Mrs. Fry had been greatly interested in the subject of female education in Greece, and during her stay in Paris she entertained a large party of Greeks. The want of elementary school books was fully discussed and a Committee of Greek, French, and English men was formed to see what could be done. The discussions were lively in the extreme. A spelling book with pictures was to be attempted, and the Greek students present undertook to prepare some elementary instruction books, which they had every reason to believe the government at Athens would circulate in every commune.

Before leaving Paris Mrs. Fry was greatly pleased at a present sent her from the Queen, of a beautiful Bible with fine engravings, as a mark of her interest and satisfaction in their visit; and the many friends they had made loaded them with presents, and did not seem to know how to show their love sufficiently.

There had been much to encourage her, improvements had been made in most of the prisons, and a Bill had been introduced before the Chamber of Deputies which met very largely with Mrs. Fry's approval. The one thing which distressed her greatly was the St. Lazare prison, which she visited on the last Sunday of her sojourn in the city. "Such a scene," she says, "of disorder and deep evil I have seldom witnessed—gambling, romping, screaming. I

spoke to some disorderly women who appeared attentive and showed some feeling. I have represented to many in authority the sad evils of this prison and have pleaded with them for reform."

On her return home after a week or two of strenuous work, increased symptoms of illness from over fatigue and a chill, laid her low, and then came the news of the sudden death of a favourite niece, who had only been married a few weeks previously, amidst every prospect of intense happiness.

This sorrow rested on her and she could not sleep, her appetite left her, and she was distressed at a condition of irritability over which she seemed to have no control. Her complaint was so much on the nerves that it produced much discomfort and distress. She was unable to attend to the reading of a beloved daughter one afternoon, and said: "How I feel for the poor when very ill, in a state like my own when some good ladies go to see them. Religious truths are strongly brought forward, often injudiciously."

Through all, her faith and trust never wavered, though she writes that if her suffering were to last no one could wish her life to be lengthened. It is pathetic to see how she chides herself for not enduring her suffering with greater patience, and for being anxious to get rid of it!

When passing through extreme pain she said: "The distress is awful, but He has been with me. I cannot express even in my greatest trials the blessedness of His service. My Saviour is my light, my life, my joy, my eternal hope of glory."

One evening, to those about her, she remarked, "Since my heart was touched at seventeen years of age I believe I have never awakened without my first thought being how best I might serve my Lord."

Her gratitude was intense for all the loving care shown her. "How I am cared for," she would say, "Love, all love, my heart is filled with love to everyone."

Her son William, tenderly beloved, and who was called to enter into eternal rest even before his mother, recorded some of her utterances as he remained with her.

"In my judgment I believe this is not death, but it is as death. It is nigh unto death. Her agony appeared almost unbearable, but she frequently expressed fears of being impatient. 'May none of you be called to pass through such a furnace; but still my sufferings have been mitigated through mercy and grace! fulness of grace!

"'My life has been a remarkable one; much have I had to go through, more than mortal knows; or ever can know; my sorrows at

times have been bitter, but my consolations sweet!'

"In the evening of the same day, holding her husband's hand in one of her's, and her son-in-law's in the other she burst forth into a most remarkable and triumphant expression of her faith and certainty of the truths of revelation."

Her condition appeared so alarming that night after night the family gathered round her bed and fervent prayer was often offered that God would abide with her in the furnace. She often repeated

"Come what, come may,
Time and the hour run through the roughest day."

As the spring advanced an improvement set in; there was less pain and the appetite increased. A great longing to visit Bath and try the waters came to her, and the thought that Sir Fowell and Lady Buxton, her beloved sister, were residing there increased her desire to leave home. With some difficulty she was removed to Bath and there many members of her family joined her. The change helped her. She gained strength and revived, a preparation, it seemed, for all the sorrows at hand.

On their return to Upton her sister-in-law Elizabeth Fry died. They had been much united in service and love, and the severing of this link was very distressing. A little grandson died the same month, and Mrs. Fry writes: "I

walk in a low valley, I pass through deep waters, I think that the death of my sister and dear little Gurney have been almost too much for me."

"She had long and earnestly desired again to attend the Meeting for Worship at Plaistow. It was proposed from Sunday to Sunday, but the difficult process of dressing was never accomplished till long after eleven o'clock, the hour when the meeting assembled.

"An attempt was made on the 28th of July, but totally failed. Her disappointment was extreme, and the hold it took of her spirits so grievous, that it was resolved to make the effort at any cost on the following Sunday. Her son William undertook to carry out her wishes; drawn by himself and a younger son in her wheeled chair, she was taken up the meeting a few minutes after the Friends were assembled, followed by her husband, her children and attendants.

"Her son William seated himself closely by her side, and the rest near her. The silence that prevailed was singularly solemn. After a time, in a clear voice she addressed the meeting. The prominent topic of her discourse was 'the death of the righteous.' She expressed the deepest thankfulness, alluding to her sister Elizabeth, for the mercies vouchsafed to 'one who had laboured long amongst them, and had been

called from time to eternity.' She quoted that text 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.' She dwelt on the purpose of affliction, on the utter weakness and infirmity of the flesh; she tenderly exhorted the young, referring to the death of little Gurney. She urged the need of devotedness of heart and steadfastness of purpose; she raised a song of praise for the eternal hope offered to the Christian, and concluded with those words in Isaiah: 'Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.'"

On the 15th of August, Juliana, the daughter of her son William, "one of the sweetest blossoms that ever gladdened parents' hearts" died suddenly after an illness of some hours. The cause seemed a mystery till the servants in the house developed scarlet fever. Then the head of the house was laid low by this terrible malady. The children were removed and as they sickened were taken back to Manor House. On the day of the funeral of his sweet little Juliana, the father asked to have his door opened that he might see the coffin pass, and as it did so, he turned to his nurse and exclaimed, "I shall go to her, but she shall not return to me." The fever was severe, his weakness distressing and there was a difficulty in taking nourishment. Everything depended on that. He was quite calm, leaving himself in God's hands, expressing his gratitude for his

many blessings, but he gradually sank, and with a bright smile exclaiming " God is so good," passed away.

His eldest daughter, Emma, was very ill, and it was thought better to keep the sad fact of this bereavement from her. She was a child of strong affections and intensely devoted to her father. She insisted on hearing the whole truth, and though resting in the belief of his eternal happiness, she could not struggle through her excessive grief, and within a week she followed him to whom she owed her life.

CHAPTER XIV.

"CROSSING THE BAR."

"CAN our mother bear this and live?" was the question uppermost in the hearts of her children, but though the mother's anguish was intense, her faith was sufficient to enable her to rejoice in their joy. "Death doth hide, but not divide," for she knew her loved one was but on Christ's "other side." She wept almost unceasingly, but she was not selfish in her sorrow, and her care was for the bereaved widow and her little ones.

The Sunday following was a day long to be remembered. Mrs. Fry closed with a solemn prayer for "those who remained," and for herself in her "low estate"; for such as had fought the good fight, kept the faith, and obtained the victory, thanksgiving and praise!

Her journal records her thoughts:—

"Sorrow upon sorrow! Since I last wrote we have lost by death, first my beloved sister-in law, Elizabeth; second, Gurney Reynolds, our sweet good grandson; third, Juliana, my dearest William's second daughter; and

fourth, above all, our most beloved son, William Storrs Fry, who appeared to catch the infection from his little girl, and died on third-day of scarlet fever, the 27th of this month. A loss inexpressible—such a son, husband, friend and brother ! but I trust that he is for ever at rest in Jesus, through the fulness of His love and grace. The trial is almost inexpressible. Oh ! may the Lord sustain us in this time of deep distress. Oh ! dear Lord, keep thy unworthy and poor sick servant in this time of unutterable trial ; keep me sound in faith, and clear in mind, and be very near to us all—the poor widow and children in this time of distress, and grant that this awful dispensation may be blessed to our souls. Amen."

Yet another sorrow opened the floodgates of grief afresh. Her brother-in-law, Sir Fowell Buxton, and a beloved niece, were called home, and the weary traveller could not but feel that she too must soon join " the great company which no man can number out of every nation and tongue and people," where every tear would be wiped away, and there would be no more death, or mourning or pain. Her children were much impressed with the way in which her spirit rose above her sorrow and weakness. One daughter says of her mother : " The regulation of her mind and her established self-discipline was at that period very instructive ;

her health very infirm, her natural spirits broken, but she persevered as much as possible in her regular habits, reserving certain hours for different occupations ; in no degree refusing to be comforted, willing to be diverted ; driving out in the carriage, or on fine days, drawn in the beautiful little pony chair that her son had given her, whilst some of the party walked by her side."

Later we find she was carried downstairs in a chair from day to day, for a few hours, and managed to attend Meeting once on First-day, when her ministry was very beautiful, " rising above the lowering clouds and seeing through the gloom the Heavenly Vision to which she had always been so obedient."

Though in extreme weakness she had an intense desire once again to visit Earlham, the home of her childhood, full of beautiful and hallowed memories. With considerable difficulty the journey was accomplished. " What a history," muses her daughter as they lingered in the old home, " since she sat and wept under the ministry of William Savery. Her ardent aspirations had been marvellously granted ; she had passed a long life of blessing to others ; she had been eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame ; when the ear heard her, then it blessed her," fulfilling the prophecy of Deborah Darby in her young days.

" She had trodden regal halls to plead for the afflicted and destitute ; she had not withheld unpalatable truth when language of warning was called for at her lips. She had penetrated the gloom of the felon's dungeon, nor had she shrunk from the touch of the unclothed maniac ; she had nourished and brought up children ; and now, helpless and suffering, she came back to take a last look at the home and the haunts of her childhood."

Her family were much impressed by her " patient, heavenly, forbearing spirit."

" Christians ought to be cheerful in affliction," she had said, " and with a smile on her face she spoke of the present happiness of her dear son and grandchildren, and though tears sometimes filled her eyes, her countenance would become almost radiant as she exclaimed ; ' And they have entered into *everlasting* life.' ' I asked her view,' says Lady Buxton, ' of the state after death,' and the reply was as follows : ' My mind is that there is a tabernacle provided.' ' I said it was a pain to me that we did not wish to depart.' ' Not at all to me,' she said, ' it is given to us to wish to remain ; it is evidently intended and right we should, and shows a much more wholesome and right state of mind than to wish to leave this world.' "

She would speak of the excessive love that had been manifested towards her as almost too

much for her, little realising that her great power was in the amount of love she had poured out on others and which always returns into one's own bosom, "good measure, pressed down and running over."

This marvellous depth of affection and sympathy showed itself in the tones of her voice. Kings yielded to it, the prisoners wept under it, their chains fell off because those in power could not resist her pleadings. The sweet humility, blended as it was with great strength of purpose and conviction, went a long way with the poor degraded creatures whom she endeavoured to raise to a higher life. When asked about the crimes they had committed, by inquisitive searchers after the sensational, she would say, "I never refer to their past; we have all sinned and come short"; and she would place herself side by side with the fallen, speaking of the need they all had of a Saviour from sin.

She spoke of her prayers as being constant for others, and on being questioned as to how that could be with so many occupations and hindrances, she said, "It is always in my heart," adding, "even in sleep I think the heart is lifted up; it is, if I may venture to say so, living in communion with Christ—in Him. What should I do without Him."

After leaving Earlham she stayed for a short

time at Runcton where she was joined by some of her family. When there she had a great and most pleasant surprise in hearing of the engagement of her youngest son, Henry, to Lucy Sheppard, of the Society of Friends. She returned home brightened by this event, and full of the joy of her son's happiness, and the preparations for the wedding.

On 26th of June the marriage took place. Mrs. Fry was not able to be present, but she desired to have a family gathering at Upton "in the most simple manner," as she said.

"She received her guests in a room opening into the flower garden, and thence was wheeled to the terrace; a very large family circle surrounding her, many connections and others of her friends. It was a beautiful scene,—the last social gathering at which she presided; and although infirm and broken in health she looked and seemed herself. In an easy chair, under the large marquee, she entered into an animated discourse on various and important subjects with the group around her, the Chevalier Bunsen, M. Merle d'Aubigny, Sir Henry Pelly, Josiah Forster, her brother Samuel Gurney, and others of her friends."

Another marriage shortly afterwards gave her great satisfaction. The daughter of her brother Samuel, Elizabeth Gurney, who had so often travelled with her and been a great com-

fort to her in her work, was married to the second son of the Chevalier Bunsen.

Shortly after this event it was thought that a change to Ramsgate might do her good, in the hope that the sea breezes, which she so much enjoyed, might bring her some return of health.

A large bedroom, adjoining the drawing room, overlooking the sea, was a great comfort to her. She was able to get out in a bath-chair as far as the pier, where she distributed her little books to passers by, and was cheered to hear from the coastguardsmen how much the libraries were used and appreciated.

From Ramsgate she wrote her last letter to her eldest daughter.

"I have felt very poorly here in the morning, more so than usual, which has been rather discouraging. I much like the house as far as I have seen it. I have felt unusually low and am sensible of my poor condition as it is most feelingly brought home to me in almost every fresh effort. I desire in my heart to say 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' I think none of my friends need fear (as I believe they used to do) my being exalted by the good opinion of my fellow mortals. May my Lord, whom I have loved and sought to serve, keep me alive unto Himself.

"I am in most tender love,

"Thy much attached mother,

"E. Fry."

During her stay at Ramsgate she was able once or twice to attend the Meeting for Worship at Drapers, Margate; that beautifully quiet spot about four miles inland, where a Friend had built some most picturesque almshouses on three sides of a large green lawn, with a belt of trees in one corner, and gravel paths winding in and out of flower beds.

On the 14th of September, in the company of many of her children she resorted to this quiet peaceful spot. The congregation, with the exception of her family, consisted of the aged poor, all of whom must have been looking forward to the great change not far from any of them, and to them she preached a remarkable sermon on the nearness of death and the necessity of preparation. It was the last united Meeting for Worship to many of her children. The next day she was left with her husband and daughter, and was afterwards joined by another daughter and her family from Norfolk. In some respects the invalid showed signs of improvement; in the power of walking, and in her appetite, and she slept better, but a new symptom had arisen in severe pains in her head.

Three weeks afterwards she again attended Drapers and spoke of the meeting as a "peculiarly solemn time." Those present said she had urged the questions: "Are we all now

ready for the Master's summons?" "If the Master should this day call us, is our work completed?" "Have we anything left to do?" Solemnly, almost awfully, reiterating the question "Are we prepared?"

One of her daughters was in the habit of reading the Scriptures while she was being dressed in the morning. On one of these occasions she said that in all her suffering and weakness she had clung to the hope that the western sky might be bright, that her "sun would not set behind the clouds"; but the hope had faded, and she dwelt rather on the high privilege of suffering as one with Christ. There was another change in this strong independent character. Her long habit of controlling others, of exercising the power she possessed in so marked a manner, the keen interest in her surroundings, all seemed to have died away. The will was broken, the tendency to resist was gone, and even the strong desire to accomplish something had passed. She was as submissive as a little child, leaving everything to be arranged by others, and her daughter writes, "It was inexpressibly affecting to see her look of meek submission and to hear her plaintive answer, 'Just as you like.'

"On one morning of acute suffering the remark was made to her, that it was marvellous she never seemed impatient to depart, believing

as there was good ground to do, that she had been fitted for the great change.

"Her fear of death had probably prevented this, for there was something in her mind which, whilst she desired 'the Kingdom,' caused her to shrink from the encounter with the great enemy—the last grapple before the victory is won. But this, too, was altered; she expressed her entire willingness to stay the Lord's time, that whilst there was any work for her to do she wished to live, but beyond that, expressed not the slightest desire for life. She added that she had come to an entire belief that any remaining dread would be taken away from her when the time came, or that in tender mercy to her timid nature she should be permitted to pass unconsciously through the dark valley."

Her habitual power of keeping in touch with the Infinite, of living in harmony with the Divine Spirit, enabled her to do and to bear all that came before her. To her sister Hannah she said on one of the closing days of her life that she believed she lived ever in the sense of God's presence, that she was never separated from Him in spirit, ever looking to Him, ever in communion, ever seeking to be preserved, taught and strengthened. She expressed the "desire that Christ should know all her most secret thoughts," exclaiming "Oh, I could not conceal anything from Him."

Every day through that week she became more and more feeble, and on Saturday, October 10th, when attempting to move to the sofa she sank to the ground, and was with much difficulty lifted into her bed, where she remained in a semi-conscious state, but she revived when the doctor came, and answered his questions correctly. Then it was thought she might have a quiet night, and her husband arranged to sit up with her as he had done all through her illness. Soon after the family had retired to their rooms the bell rang loudly, and they assembled round her bed. She was sufficiently conscious to appreciate a few texts which were repeated, but it was evident she had had a stroke. She lay powerless, and hardly speaking, but as the morning broke she said to her maid, "Oh, Mary, dear Mary, I am very ill! Pray for me—it is a strife, but I am safe."

"About nine o'clock one of her daughters sitting on the bedside had open in her hand that passage in Isaiah, 'I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, fear not.' . . Just then her mother roused a little, and in a slow, distinct voice uttered these words, 'Oh, my dear Lord, help and keep thy servant!' These were the last words she spoke—one bright glance of intelligence passed over her features never to return, entire unconsciousness followed." The physical struggle was great,

but it was evident that it was they only who suffered, as they prayed: "How long O Lord! how long?" Her eyes were closed to earth, her ears no longer responded to the voice of her beloved, and as the sun rose most gloriously over the ocean, and flooded her room with light, a few gentle sighs at intervals were noticed, then perfect stillness, and she had entered into the glory of her Lord and had seen the "King in His beauty."

She had entered into that holy place where God's great servants "grow near and nearer Him with all delight," where she would receive "the comfort of all her toil, and have joy for all her sorrow, and reap what she had sown, even the fruit of all the tears, and prayers, and sufferings for the King by the way."

"So when her hour
Had come, her children round her, she prepared
To meet the Lord she loved. She, whose long life
Was lived for Him; whose earliest waking thought
Was evermore for Him; whose gathering years
Were crowned with deeds of mercy; whose dear name
In every clime, thousands of rescued souls
Uttered with tremulous lips, and full of praise;
Whose thought was always how to raise, to help
The poor, the sick, the fallen; how to strike
The fetters from the prisoner and the slave."*

In the grey of the early morning of the Monday of the following week, the loved, the

* Lewis Morris.

revered, was brought for the last time to her home of many years.

Great numbers made their way to the Friends' Burial-ground at Barking. She was laid to rest by her little Elizabeth, whom she had so tenderly mourned. At the grave there was a deep silence in the midst of the great crowd, broken at last by her brother, Joseph John Gurney, who addressed the assembly, and then offered prayer and gave thanks for her life. How true are Hannah More's words of her :—

"They were naked and she clothed them ;
In prison and she visited them, ignorant and she taught them,
For *His* sake, in *His* name, and by *His* word
Who went about doing good."

Mrs. Fry's eldest daughter, Katherine, who was with her mother at the last, wrote to Hannah then in Madeira.

" It seems almost impossible, my most tenderly-beloved sister, to convey to thee a sufficiently warm expression of love and deep sympathy in the pains of absence. At the same time, dearest Hannah, you have lost nothing by absence. Our precious mother continued much in her usual state till the evening of the eleventh, Sunday, when her final seizure took place, and after that she was scarcely conscious. Many arrived too late ; the following evening, thirteen of her children were here. What my feelings are I can scarcely tell. I do believe the truths of religion and that she is in glory, but I cannot sit and thread phrases as you do beads. Neither do I repine, nor wish her back again ; but I feel utterly cast down—solitary. . . ."

Nothing perhaps in the way of testimony is more beautiful than the words of her niece Priscilla: "We cannot expect the next generation to *believe* what we know of the treasure she was. They may form some idea of her outward acts and capabilities; they cannot know what she was personally. After seeing her in some difficult work, my feeling was; marvellous as were her gifts, the real wonder was in her *grace*, her extraordinary power of loving and caring for others; the flow of the oil which in almost all others is by drops, in her was a rich steady stream, able to take in the meanest, the most unattractive, the most unrepaying; her power of condescending to the little interests of others combined with her greatness, her high natural powers of mind and her magnitude of action. We who tasted of it can never forget it, but I feel it vain to hope that our children will ever fully take it in."

CHAPTER XV.

CHARACTER.

IN considering the character of the remarkable woman whose life we have endeavoured to sketch, the deepest impression made upon us is the beautiful balance of her nature. The want of proportion is what strikes us so much in human nature generally, whereas here we seem struck with the perfect symmetry.

She held her convictions with a grip that would not let them go; at the same time her blessing would rest on the holder of other widely divergent views. Her courage rarely failed her; but her humility was deep and true. To *her*, self-sacrifice seemed natural; but she had all patience with those not so high-minded as herself.

Her tenderness brought the tears to the eyes of the most depraved, but her strong denunciation of cruelty and injustice made the strong man tremble.

"The woman's power is for rule not for battle," wisely says John Ruskin, and most truly did this woman exercise her power with

majesty and sweetness, that breathed an atmosphere of love and peace none could resist.

There are many lessons we may gather from the life of Elizabeth Fry; one which we think she would most desire to be pressed home is, that every woman has her individual vocation, and that a sphere of usefulness is open to all.

It is not that she thought it right for people to undertake a public career, such as her own, unless under exceptional circumstances, for she considered that such work could only be blessed if it followed the immediate call of the spirit of God. But that some outside work of mercy was open to every Christian woman she firmly believed. And she was convinced that none are brought too low, in sin and misery, to be beyond the call of love and the appeal of Christ to follow Him.

Such a life sets us thinking, and we ask ourselves why there are not more who are giving of their best to bless those in need?

"We are too fearful," says Priscilla Gurney, "of committing ourselves to Him and casting ourselves, without reserve, on His guidance, forgetting that He will impose no burden which we shall, through His assistance, be unable to bear."

Strange that we so often fear the consequences of doing right; that we are so timid in trusting the Divine vision. Is it that we have greater

confidence in our own judgment and have not learned "man's weakness waiteth upon God" and in that weakness we are made strong?

We need to venture far more to go forward as Elizabeth Fry did, when each call comes, daring to do the right, hopeful of the triumph of goodness, and conscious that the Kingdom of Heaven can only come through our individual faithfulness.

Above and beyond all, Elizabeth Fry is a very beautiful illustration that it is through daily union and communion with the Divine Presence that we are able to hear His voice; only in absolute surrender to His guidance that we can be, as she was

"One who never turned her back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held, we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep—to wake."*

* Robert Browning.

CHAPTER XVI.

CRIMINALS AND CRIME.

MANY changes have taken place in our prison system, but deep strong convictions were expressed by Mrs. Fry which are still worthy of attention.

Her strong protest was against: first, the solitary system; second, the silent system; third, the semi-darkness of many cells; and she gives us her reasons for objecting to these methods.

She felt the solitary system was too cruel even for the worst crimes, and that as a preparation for returning to social life it failed utterly, the change being so great as almost to unhinge the mind. She mentions how, when visiting one convict ship, several of the women from having been brought into the bustle of life, after separate confinement, became quite delirious.

The silent system met with her strong disapproval on different grounds. "Who," she says, "that has reflected much, or marked the workings of the mind of man, has not found

that without word or action, a spirit may pervade any collection of persons, either of resistance, opposition, and defiance; or of comparative kindness."

Man, she affirmed, must not be treated "as a machine, and remodelled through having his conduct bent to obedience by strong coercion and dread of punishment," "opposition should never be excited unnecessarily. Men are not likely to abhor evil from being driven to abhor the *method* by which it is purposed to bring them to good. The more hateful the restraints of virtue in the aggregate become to anyone, and the stronger his dislike of the authorities by which they are enforced, the more ready is he for the commission of fresh crime."

Confinement that secluded from the vicious, but allowed of frequent intercourse with sober and well-conducted persons, would have been in her view the wisest plan.

Dark cells were strongly condemned by her, and even where windows existed, when the glass was such that nothing could be seen through them, she felt the obscured light was unsatisfactory. The culprits should at least see the sky, she said, "indeed I should prefer more than the sky without the liability of seeing fellow prisoners." Her reason was for the preservation of the health of mind and body in the poor creatures. "I am certain," she

adds, "that separate confinement produces an unhealthy state both of mind and body, and that therefore everything should be done to counteract this influence which is baneful in its moral tendency; for I am satisfied that a sinful course of life increases the tendency to mental derangement as well as bodily disease, and I am as certain that an unhealthy state of mind and body has generally a demoralising influence, as the mind in an enervated state is more liable to yield to temptation, than when in a lively powerful state; and I consider light, air, and the power of seeing something beyond the mere monotonous walls of a cell, highly important."

"I should prefer a prison where women were allowed to work together in companies, to have their meals together, under proper superintendence, and their recreation also; but I would always have them separated at night; I believe it would conduce to the health both of body and mind. Their being in companies during the day tends, under proper regulations, to the advancement of principle and industry, for it affords a stimulus. I should think solitary confinement proper only in very atrocious cases. I would divide my women for a few weeks till I knew where they were; but I would afterwards regulate them as I have now mentioned."

Our moral nature is so largely influenced by our surroundings, and our physical condition, that everything should be arranged in prison life for the bodily well-being of the prisoners—plenty of ventilation, plenty of sunshine, scrupulous cleanliness, association, as far as possible, with those of sound mind and high principle—if improvement is to be looked for.

Much has been done and many of Mrs. Fry's suggestions have been followed, so that to-day we can see how her convictions, when carried into effect, have produced the expected results. Ladies are still doing a good work. Employment is given to the women in laundry work, machining, knitting, and sack-making for the Post Office. Lectures and addresses are delivered at intervals and religious services held daily. The cells are light and airy, but there is nothing to be seen from the windows at present, though clear glass is being substituted for glazed, which is distinctly good.

Until recently all instruction was given from cell to cell, the schoolmaster arranging to bestow as much time as he could to the individual pupil. It has been found, however, that uniting them to work together has been productive of very excellent results, this again testifying to Mrs. Fry's keen perception as to what is best for the prisoners.

There are those who will say if we make the prisons too agreeable we shall be encouraging crime.

Without some careful thought this may appear to be a likely result, but those who have made a study of human nature will know that anything of the nature of cruelty only hardens a man or woman, and excites a spirit of revenge, so that if we are simply thinking of making prison life as miserable as possible we shut the door upon any hope of real improvement and reformation.

It is well to notice that we have two classes of prisoners requiring very different treatment from anything they are receiving at the present time. We have those who go to prison for minor offences; and those who commit crime in consequence of mental and physical weakness.

Short sentences such as three or four days, a week, or even a month, are absolutely useless in reforming the criminals, and the demoralisation from loss of character is accentuated; whereas for slight offences a different method might save many from becoming hardened offenders.

In view of this fact a Probation Act has been passed, giving Magistrates the option of placing the delinquent under the care of an officer, who has the authority of the court behind him. If the culprit's behaviour is good the end is

achieved, the stigma of the prison has been avoided, and the expense saved of keeping the offender.

Probation officers have been appointed, and it is hoped that magistrates will make use of the power now given them through the sanction of the Home Office. The result has been very satisfactory thus far, but it has only been in operation for one year.

The second class of criminals, those who are deficient physically or mentally, need entirely different treatment, and the present method of simply sending them to prison is cruel. They are continually being re-convicted. During one year 700 of this class were sent to prison, each of whom had been sentenced more than fifty times previously, and 2,000 had been sentenced more than twenty times.

A number of these poor creatures are Epileptics, and they spend their days either in prison, in the workhouse, or on the streets, and are hardly responsible for their actions. Their burdens are heavy enough and we add to their misery by branding them as criminals. It is only natural to wonder why they are not sent to reformatories? The reason is that in all the reformatory schools a medical certificate is required stating that there is no mental or physical weakness. The startling fact is that *no* place exists for these poor diseased offenders

which can offer them the slightest hope of improvement. Much might be done by careful treatment and the continual returns to prison be stopped, if only the Government would take this matter up. One thousand children last year were of this class.

In the *Hibbert Journal* (October, 1909) Sir William Collins, in writing on the Prevention of Crimes Act, says: "The majority of *habituals* are of weak nature, unfortunates who have never had a chance, and the condition of mentally defectives amounts almost to a public scandal. . . Prison treatment for such savours of a refinement of cruelty."

Let us take an example of two of these "unfortunates" from the life of Quintin Hogg, who knew from personal observation, as few do, the pitiful cases of ragged child life in London. A boy of eleven had been in prison three times for sleeping out in the open air, his brother aged ten had been locked up four times for the same offence (?) What sort of home had they escaped from? Their father had killed their mother through ill-usage when in drink. He married again, and one night he cursed his children for living and said he should take them out and drown them. The only remark his wife made was, "If you are going to drown them you may as well let me have their boots." He went off leading a child by each hand, staggered

down the street till he reached the river, when he threw them in one after the other. Quintin Hogg is right in saying, "The true criminal is not the child which has been sinned against, but the nation which has so sinned as to surround the child with environments wholly antagonistic to its proper development."

Thomas Holmes, the Secretary of the Howard Association says: "It is high time that some large and humane method of treating these cases was established. For a wise nation would care for them, and in caring for them would protect itself and would lift that heavy burden of anxiety, terror and suspense that destroys the peace of so many homes."*

There is one other point in connection with crime and prisons which can hardly be overlooked. The question arises: Is there any *one* thing that produces disease, stunted growth, immoral behaviour, cruelty and all forms of iniquity?

Undoubtedly we can put our finger on the chief cause without the slightest hesitation.

We are deliberately *breeding* crime in our public houses. Sixty thousand victims of

* The Howard Association (Devonshire Chambers, Bishopsgate Street Without, E.C.) was instituted for the promotion of the best methods for the treatment and prevention of crime. It is doing excellent work, and information is gladly given to those who are interested in Prison Reform.

drink are killed annually, but that is nothing to the thousands upon thousands who are rendered incapable, vicious, cruel and insane, through drink.

The *Official Report* from Scotland for 1908 reads as follows :—

"The 103,000 persons charged with drunkenness and disorder, arising in the former case entirely from the abuse of alcohol, and in the latter mainly so, provide the great bulk of the work for the constabulary and the courts.

"But it has been found that drink is an important factor in the causes of more serious crimes. The bulk of assaults is brought about by it, and it is the common explanation of 589 sentences in the year for cruelty to children. About 80 per cent. of charges for murder and culpable homicide arise from intoxication. But the influence of drink extends into other classes of crimes which are not generally supposed to be affected by it.

"From five diffierent careful investigations made among persons guilty of crimes against property, it has been found that in 60 per cent. of them, the criminal was not sober at the time of committing the offence."

It is idle and *worse*, after reading such a Report, to ignore the fact continually reiterated by those who know our prisons and criminals, that 90 per cent. are there directly and indirectly through drink.

Happily a great deal of interest is now being manifested in slum life, and it is realised that the poor little children born into these drunken homes come into the world so weighted with

disease that they have no chance of taking their proper place in the community.

Here is a wide field of usefulness, to learn even more than we have done, the temptations which beset so many of the poor; to witness for ourselves as Elizabeth Fry, did, their misery and degradation. Then with her boundless hope, and true humility, broken lives will be healed, sad hearts comforted, bleeding feet will be guided into safe paths, and young lives will be trained to noble deeds.

For this we must suffer, but through our suffering the victory will be gained.

"The sorrow of the world is hopelessness,
The sorrow of the Christ is endless hope,
We share that sorrow, and we share that hope.

"His hope—the undiminished hope of Christ,
Hope for ourselves, and hope for every man.
The hope of sin subdued through patient love."

Index.

Aberdeen, Lord, 126.
Albert, Prince, 125, 126.
Allen, William, 108, 113.
Aubigny, M. Merle d', 151.

Bailey, Old, 61, 62.
Ball, William, 98.
Barclay, Robert, 11.
Barking, Friends' Burial ground, 158.
Batty, Dr., 30.
Bell, Catherine. See Gurney, Catherine.
"Betsy's Imps," 32.
Bohlen, Count, 112.
Botany Bay, convicts sent to, 53, 55.
Brussels, Dean of, 109.
Broglie, Duchess of, 95.
Bunsen, Baron, 102, 151.
Buxton, Anna, 48.
Buxton, Hannah (*née* Gurney, 35, 142, 149.
Buxton, Thomas Fowell (Sir), 35, 47, 52; anti-slavery advocate, 88; 142; death, 147.

Capital punishment, 56, 59, 61, 62.
Carlyle, Thomas, 105.
Clermont-en-Oise, 134.
Coastguardsmen, libraries for, 87, 152.
Connor, Mary, 51.
Convict ships, 130.
Crabbe, George, 50.
Criminals and Crime, 163.
Czartoryski, Princess, 112.

Darby, Deborah, 30. 148.
"Death Sermon," 46.
Death sentence, 46.
Denmark, Prince and Princess, 72.
Derby, Earl of, 69.
Drapers Meeting-house, 153.

Earlham, 14, 42, 148.

Felder, Pasteur, 124.
Forster, Josiah, 94, 97, 109, 134, 151.
Forster, Wm., 47.
France, E. Fry visits, 94, 101, 134; prison reform in, 139.
Fricker, Eliza, case of, 56.
Friends, Meetings of, 73, 74, 75.
Fry, Elizabeth (*née* Gurney), birth, 11; loss of mother, 15; shyness of, 16; gaiety, 17; her journal, 24; meets William Savery, 25; adopts Quaker's dress, 27, 35; visit to London, 29; change of life, 31; "Betsy's Imps," 32; courted by Joseph Fry, 33; marriage, 35; birth of first child, 35; work among poor, 36; removes to Plashet, 38; "call to the ministry," 40; starts a girls' school, 41; power

Fry, Elizabeth (*continued*).
as a preacher, 43; prison work, 44, *et seq.*; meets Stephen Grellet, 47; first visit to Newgate 47; other visits, 50, 56, 59, 72; visits to convict ships, 54, 163; three great gifts of, 57; presented to Queen, 60; influence upon prisoners, 63, 65; visit to Scotland, 69; at Knowsley, 69; meets Sir R. Peel, 72; visit of Prince and Princess of Denmark, 72; humility, 76; financial losses, 78; leaves Plashet, 80; in Ireland, 82; on the continent, 83; visiting committees started, 86, 96; work for servants, 86; starts libraries for coastguardsmen, 87; interest in nurses for sick, 87, 88; speaks on behalf of anti-slavery cause, 88; letter to her children, 91, 92; visits France, 94; in Scotland, 98; report on prisons, 99; another visit to France, 101; desperate prisoners, 105; visits the Queen, 107; travels in Belgium, Holland and Germany, 109; received by royalty, 111; interest in Lutheran church, 113; visit to Holland, 117; Denmark, 120; illness, 124, 129; at the Mansion House, 127; visited by King of Prussia, 128; arranges for matrons for convict ships, 130; last visit to the continent, 134; at Tuilleries, 137; entertains Greeks, 139; at St. Lazare prison, 139; serious illness. 140, *et seq*; visits Earlham, 148; depth of affection, 150; at Ramsgate, 152; attends Drapers Meeting, 153; death, 156; burial at Barking, 158; character, 160.
Fry, Elizabeth, 142.
Fry, Emma, 145.
Fry, Henry, 151.
Fry, Joseph, 32, 33, 35, 38, 78.
Fry, Juliana, 144.
Fry, Katherine, 158.
Fry, William Storrs, 32, 38.
Fry, William (son of E. Fry), 141, 143, 144, 147.

Galitzen, Prince, 85.
Girando, Baron de, 104.
Gloucester, Duchess of, 72, 116.
Goat's Lane, Meeting at, 21.
Good, Dr. and Mrs., 30.
Gracechurch Street Meeting, 36.
Graham, Sir James, 126.
Granville, Lord, 95.
Greece, female education in, 139.
Grellet, Stephen, 47.
Groben, Count, 112.
Grove, The (Norwich), 25.
Guizot, M., 136, 138.
Gurney, Catherine (sister of Eliz. Fry), 21; reads Scriptures to clergy, 13, 15; care of the home, 16; system of education, 19, 22, 28.

Gurney, Catherine (*née* Bell), 11, 12; death, 14.
Gurney, Elizabeth (niece of E. F.), 110, 151.
Gurney, Elizabeth (see Fry, Elizabeth).
Gurney, Hannah, 14, 35. (See Buxton, Hannah.)
Gurney, John, 11, 14, 18, 23, 29, 32; death, 40.
Gurney, John, (brother of Elizabeth), 49.
Gurney, Joseph John, 14, 69, 134, 158.
Gurney, Louisa, 14, 16, 19, 20.
Gurney, Rachel, 14, 21, 23, 50.
Gurney, Richenda, 14, 21, 23, 24, 27, 28, 31.
Gurney, Samuel, 80, 128; Mrs. S., 88.

Harcourt, Lady, 60, 61.
Hare, Augustus, 13.
Hogg, Quintin, 169, 170.
Holland, King and Queen of, 117.
Holmes, Thomas, 170.
"Holy Club," Methodist, 44.
Howard, John. 44.
Howard Association, 170*n*.

Inchbold, Mrs., 30.
Irving, Lydia, 94, 97.

Kinghorn, Rev., 22.

Lansdowne, Marquis of 62, 64.
Litoffsky prison, incident at. 85.
Lutheran Church, 113.

Mecklenburg, Duchess of, 137.
Merode, Comte de, 109.
Mestchersky, Princess Sophia, 84.
Methodists, the, 44.
More, Hannah, 158.

National Guardian Institution, 86.
Newgate, 45; condition of in 1813, 46; visits of S. Grellet and Wm. Forster, 47; visits of E. Fry, 47; further visits, 50, *et seq.*; description of meeting in, 64; 82; King of Prussia at, 128.
Nicholas, Emperor, 85.
Nightingale, Florence, 88.
Nurses for sick, training of, 88.

Orleans, Duchess of, 137.
Opie, Amelia, 30.

Peel, Sir Robert, 72, 126.
Pelly, Sir Henry, 151.
Pietists, 111, 114*n*.
Pirie, Sir John, 125.
Pitchford, John, 20, 22, 23, 25.
Plaistow, meeting at, 143.
Pressensé, M. 95,
Prince William Frederick (Duke of Gloucester), 21, 60.
Prison Reform, 44, 82, 163 *et seq.*; on the continent, 83, 85; in Russia, 84, 124; solitary system, 163.
Prisons, condition of, 45, 118, 121; report on, 99.
Prussia, Queen of, 109; court, 111, *et seq.*; King of, 127.
Pryor, Mrs., 55.
Public-houses and crime, 170.

Ramsgate, 152.
Reynolds, Gurney, 142, 143, 144, 146.
Runcton, 151.

Savery, William, visits Norwich, 24, 148.
Scotland, crime in, 171.
Servants, care for, 86, 87.
Sheppard, Lucy, 151.
Sidmouth, Lord, 60, 61.
Siddons, Mrs., 30.
Skelton, Harriet, case of, 59. 67.
Slavery, abolition of, 88, 89.
Society for Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 44.
St. Lazare prison, 96, 139.
St. Mildred's Court, 36, 80.
Sussex, Duke of, 116.

Taylor, Rev. C., 65.
Tholück, Professor, 110.
Tuilleries, 137.
Twiss, Mrs., 30.

Upton Lane, 80, 116; visit of King of Prussia, 128.

Venning, Walter, 83, 85.

Wakefield, Priscilla and Edward, 11.
Wellington, Duke of, 125.
Wilberforce, William, 79.

Yearly Meeting, Friends, 73

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